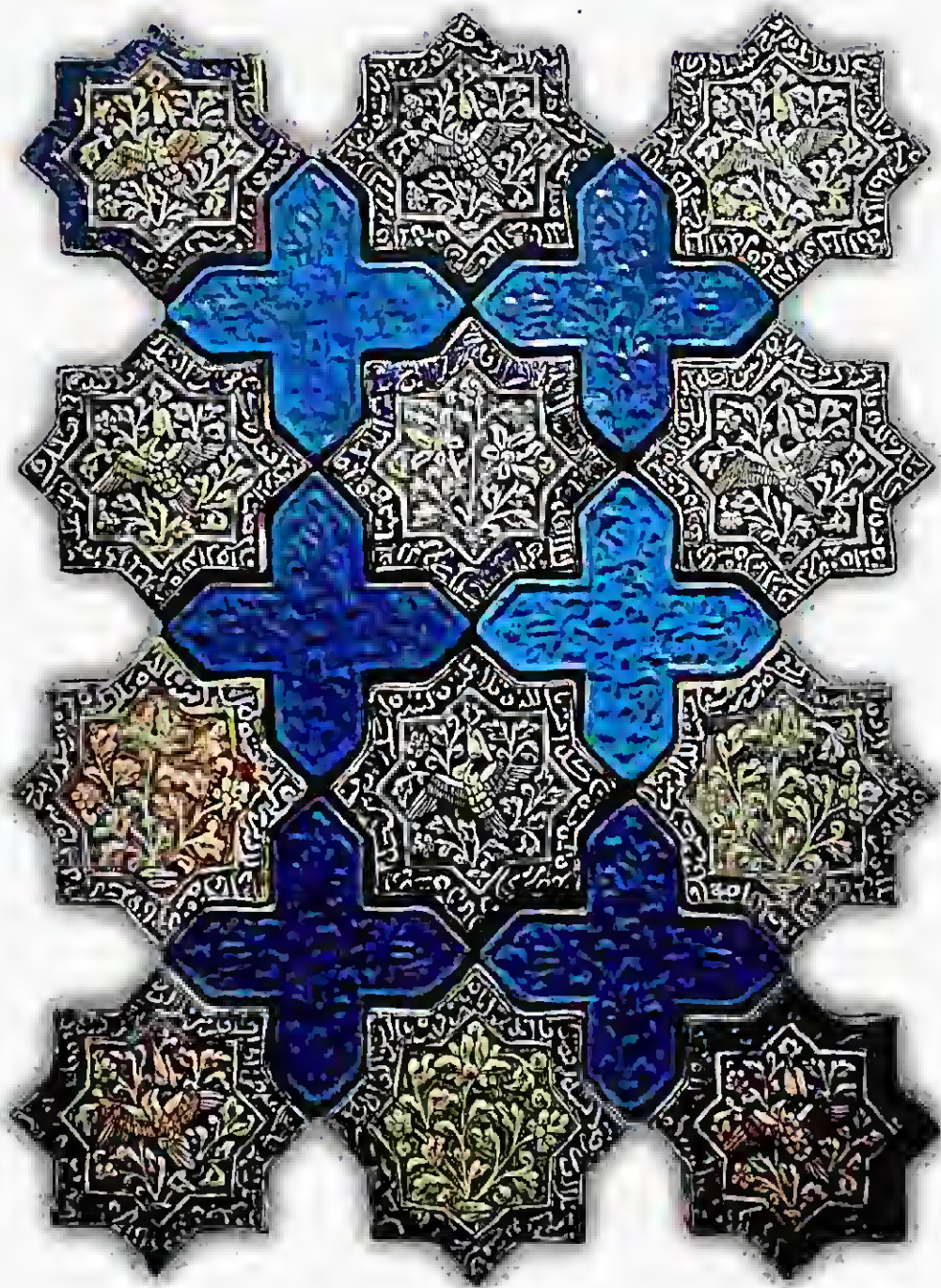


# THE HADITH FOR BEGINNERS



MUHAMMAD ZUBAYR SIDDIQI

# HADITH FOR BEGINNERS

An Introduction to Major  
Hadith Works and Their Compilers

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**IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER**

*To thee I dedicate this, although it  
does not requite even one of thy favours,  
the memory of which has not been  
obliterated by Time.*

## ***Preface***

This little book has been composed in order to present to the English-reading public, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, the viewpoint of orthodox Islam with regard to Hadith Literature, its origin and development, and its criticism by the Muslim doctors. For in English, only one book on the subject has been published (*The Traditions of Islam* by Alfred Guillaume, Oxford, 1924). But it does not represent the Muslim point of view. In other European languages (like German, French and Dutch) several highly learned and critical works on *Hadith* have been published. But none of them represents orthodox Islamic views.

This book was begun in 1930 and was almost completed in 1936. In composing it, not only many of the important works of the modern European Orientalists have been utilized but also a large part of the original Arabic sources, some of which (so far as I know) have not hitherto been fully utilized. The reader, therefore, may find in this work some important material which may not be available in any of the European works on the subject.

Some parts of this book were published in *The Proceedings of the All India Oriental Conference* (1937), pp. 187-206, in the *Proceedings of the Idara-i-Ma'arif-i-Islamiya*, Lahore (1933), pp. 61-71; and an Arabic translation of Chapter VI ("The Special Features of Hadith Literature") was published as a part of *al-Mabahith al- 'Ilmiyah*, by the *Da'irat al-Ma'arif* of Hyderabad (India) in 1939. But the book could not be published until now on account of circumstances which need not be mentioned. It was in 1959 that the University Grants Commission of India and the Calcutta University provided the necessary funds for its publication. I should be failing in my duty if I did not express my gratitude to them for this favour, and also to Dr. G.C. Raychaudhury, the present Registrar of Calcutta University, for his sympathy and keen interest in the publication of the book. I must also express

my heartfelt thanks to Dr. S.A. Kamali, a young, competent scholar of Arabic, well-trained in the modern method of literary research, who, very kindly, checked the references in the book, gave me ungrudging help in reading its proofs, and prepared the list of abbreviations and the Index. My thanks are also due to Dr. M.W. Mirza of Lucknow, who translated (from Turkish into English) for me a passage from an article by Prof. Ahmed Ates (see p. 138); to Mawlana Mukhtar Ahmad Nadwi (a keen and critical student of Hadith, who traced for me certain references to some Hadith-works) and Haji Muhammad Yusuf, respectively the Librarian and the owner of the Haji 'Abd Allah Library, Calcutta, for lending me several books on Hadith from their Library.

In conclusion, I must add that if the perusal of this book creates an active interest in Hadith-Literature and Islamic Culture among young Indian scholars of Arabic and of Islam, I shall consider that an ample reward for my long years of hard work.

November 1, 1961

M.Z.S.

# ***Contents***

## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

<b>Chapter 1</b>	<i>Hadith</i> .....	29
	The Significance of <i>Hadith</i>	
	<i>Hadith</i> and <i>Sunnah</i> .....	30
	<i>Hadith</i> —a subject of keen interest .....	30
	The writing of <i>Ahadith</i> .....	33
	The Collection of <i>Ahadith</i> .....	35
	The <i>Muwatta</i> .....	38
	The legal and historical traditions .....	39
	Classification of books of <i>Hadith</i> .....	40
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<i>Hadith</i> and the Companions .....	48
	Significance of the term <i>Sahabi</i> .....	48
	The number of the Companions .....	48
	The Companions who related traditions .....	49
	The number of traditions related by them	
	The problem of the prohibition and	
	permissibility of <i>Kitabat</i> (of <i>Hadith</i> ) .....	62
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<i>Hadith</i> after the death of the	
	Companions .....	72
	The Followers and their classification	
	The traditionists' devotion to <i>Hadith</i> .....	74
	Their number .....	76
	Forgery in <i>Hadith</i> , its causes and various	
	classes of forgers .....	77
	The honest and critical traditionists of	
	various periods .....	83
	The criticism of the reporters .....	86
	Travel in quest of knowledge (traditions) ....	89

<b>Chapter 4</b>	<i>Hadith Literature</i> .....	96
	The Beginnings.....	96
	Many of the <i>Musnads</i> ascribed to early authors were compiled long after them.....	97
	The <i>Musnad</i> of Abu Da'ud al-Tayalisi and his life.....	98
	The <i>Musnad</i> of Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal and his life.....	101
	The <i>Musannaf Works</i> .....	109
	The <i>Sahih</i> of al-Bukhari and his life .....	110
	The <i>Sahih</i> of Muslim and his life.....	118
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<i>Hadith Literature—contd.</i> .....	125
	The <i>Sunan Works</i> .....	125
	The <i>Sunan</i> of Abu Da'ud al-Sijistani and his life.....	126
	The <i>jami'</i> of al-Tirmidhi and his life .....	129
	The <i>Sunan</i> of al-Nasa'i and his life.....	134
	The <i>Sunan</i> of al-Darimi and his life .....	136
	The <i>Sunan</i> of Ibn Maja and his life.....	137
	The <i>Sunan</i> of al-Daraqutni and his life .....	138
	The <i>Sunan</i> of al-Bayhaqi and his life .....	140
	The <i>Sunan</i> of Sa'id b.Mansur and his life	
	The <i>Sunan</i> of Abu Muslim al-Kashshi and his life.....	141
	The <i>Mujam Works</i> , the <i>Mujams</i> of al-Tabarani and his life.....	142
	The importance of the various works in <i>Hadith Literature</i> .....	143
<b>Chapter 6</b>	Some of the Special Features of the <i>Hadith</i> <i>Literature</i> .....	148
	Forgery in <i>hadith</i> and its beginning .....	149
	The System of <i>Isnad</i> (Chain of Transmitters) .....	151



	The problem of its origin, its use by the Jews, the remarks of Ibn Hazm, its use by the Indians, its earliest application to Hadith, its development by the Muslims, its application to the Arabic MSS. The part played by women in the transmission and cultivation of <i>Hadith</i> and <i>Hadith</i> literature.....	162
	The important women traditionists of the various periods	
	The integrity and independence of the traditionists .....	173
	The exactitude of the traditionists, [the preliminaries and methods of learning, teaching and writing Hadith]. .....	175
<b>Chapter 7</b>	The Sciences of Tradition .....	185
	<i>Asma' al-Rijal</i> [Chronology, Biography and Criticism of the Narrators of Hadith].....	186
	Ibn Sa'd, his <i>Tabaqat</i> and its importance .....	193
	<i>Kitab al-Ta'rikh</i> of al-Bukhari.....	197
	<i>Usd al-Ghaba</i> .....	199
	The Isaba of Ibn Hajar and his life	
	Al-Khatib and his <i>Ta'rikh-u-Baghdad</i> .....	203
	Ibn al-'Khatib and his <i>Ta'rikh-u-Baghdad</i> ..	203
	Ibn al-'Asakir and his History of Damascus .....	204
<b>Chapter 8</b>	The Sciences of Tradition—contd. ....	209
	Criticism of reporters of an event in the Qur'an, by the Prophet, the Companions and their successors. Development of the science of 'formal' criticism.....	211
	Classifications of Ahadith.....	213
	The legal importance of traditions .....	214
	'Material' criticism of the texts of traditions and its principles .....	219
	Examples of criticism of the text.....	221

## **List of Illustrations**

1. Colophon of MS. of the *Musnad* of Imam Shafi'f (at the Murad Mulla Library, Istambul, No. 570). Copied in the year 381 A.H. Corresponding to pp. 218f. in the pointed edition (printed at Arrah in India, 1889). This is one of the earliest MSS. of Hadith collections, the earliest one known to me being the MS. of what is said to be *Sahih Muslim*.  
.....page. 224
2. A page from the MS. of *al-Majmu'ah fi al-Hadith* (described in OPC, v, part 2, pp. 191 ff., No. 462) :—
  - (i) Certificate of reading the MS. Teacher : Shaykh Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Wani. Students (whose names are mentioned) : about 20 in number. Place : the house of al-Wani in Damascus. Date 21.8.732 A.H.
  - (ii) Certificate of reading the MS. Teacher : 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Mamdud and 'Umar b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Ahad. Place : Samsatiyah Monastery in Damascus. Date 15.11.732 A.H.
  - (iii) Certificate of reading the MS. Teacher : Safiyah (the daughter of Ahmad, and the wife of Baha' al-Din 'Ali b. 'Umar). Students (men and women) about 10 in number. Place : Damascus. Date 5.11.739 A.H.  
.....page 225
3. Pages from a MS., *al-Mashikhat ma' al-Takhrij*, by 'Ali b. Ahmad Ibn al-Bukhari (described in OPC, v, part 2. pp. 51ff., No. 322) :—
  - (i) Certificate of reading the MS. (11 sittings). Teacher : the author (Ibn al-Bukhari). Students (men and women): more than 500. Place : Jami' 'Umar, Damascus. Date 687 A.H.
  - (ii) Certificate of reading the MS. (6 sittings). Teacher : 'Ali b. Ibrahim al-Sayrafi. Students (men and women) : more than 200. Place : Aleppo. Date 13.5.736 A.H.  
.....page 226

## **Abbreviations**

- AnIs *Annali dell' Islam*. Leone Caetani. Vols.i-viii, Milan, 1905-1918: vols. ix-x, Rome, 1926.
- ArH *Lectures on Arabic Historians*. D S Margoliouth. Calcutta, 1930.
- AHM *Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the Mihna*. W.M. Patton Leiden 1897.
- AT *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*. Abu Hanifah Dinaweri. Leiden, 1897.
- AT *al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*. Abu Hanifah Dinaweri. Leiden, 1888.
- ATb *Annales (Ta'rikh al-Rusul w'al-Muluk)*. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari. Ed. by Th. Noldeke et al. Leiden, 1879.
- Blm *Bulugh al-maram min adillat al-ahkam*. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani. Delhi, 1325 A.H.
- BM *Bustan al-Muhaddithin*. Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz Dihlawi. Delhi, 1898.
- CFT *Catalogue du fonds Tibetain de la Bibliotheque Nationale*. P. Cordier. Paris, 1915 (vol. iii).
- DK *al-Durar al-Kaminah*. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani. Hyderabad (India), 1348-50 A.H. 4 vols.
- DL *al-Dau' al-Lami'*. Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Sakhawi. Cairo, 1353-55 A.H., 12, vols.
- EIs *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. by M. Th. Houtsma et al. Leiden, 1927.
- Elsn *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition. Ed. by J.H. Kramers, H.A.R. Gibb et al. Leiden, 1954-. Vol. i, fasc. 1-16.
- Elss *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. by H.A.R. Gibb, J.H. Kramers. Leiden, 1953.
- FB *Fath. al-Bari* (commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*). Ibn

- Hajar 'Asqalani. Ed. by Mahmud Tahtawi. Egypt, 1319 A.H.
- FBN *Futuh al-Buldan*. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad al-Baladhuri. Ed. by M. J. de Goeje. Leiden, 1866.
- FfM *Al-Fisal fi al-Milal*. Abu Muhammad 'Ali b. Ahmad Ibn Hazm. Ed. by 'Abd al-Rahman Khalifah, Cairo, 1347-48 A.H., 5 vols.
- FM *Fath al-Mughith* (commentary on Zayn al-Din 'Iraqi's *Alfiyah*) Sharms al-Din Muhammad al Sakhawi. Lucknow, n.d.
- FMj *Al-Fawa'id al-Majmu'ah fi Bayan al-Ahadith al-Maudu'ah*. Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Shaukani. Lahore, 1223 (1323?) A.H.
- FN *Al-Fihrist*. Ibn al-Nadim. Ed. by Gustav Flugel. Leipzig, 1871-72., 2 vols.
- GAL *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*. C. Brockelmann. Leiden, 1937.
- GT *Genealogische Tabellen der Arabischen Stamme und Familien*. Accompanied by the *Register zu den GT*. Ferdinand Wustenfild. Gottingen, 1852-53.
- HB *Hujjat Allah al-Balighah*. Shah Waliy Allah Dihlawi. Cairo, 1352 A.H.
- HH *Hayat al-Hayawan*. Kamal al-Din al-Damiri. Bulaq, 1274 A.H., 2 vols.
- HII *History of Indian Literature*. M. Winternitz. Calcutta University Press, 1927.
- HMH *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Franz Rosenthall. Leiden, 1952.
- IsC *Islamic Culture*. Hyderabad (India).
- IA *Al-Ihkam fi Usul al-Ahkam*. Abu Muhammad 'Ali b. Ahmad Ibn Hazm. Cairo, 1345-47 A.H., 8 parts.
- IMA *al-Isti 'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab*. Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. Hyderabad (India), 1318 A.H.

- IS *Irshad al-Sari* (commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*). Ahmad b. Muhammad a - Qastallani. Bulaq, 1285 A.H.
- ITS *al-Isabah fi Tam'yiz al-Sahabah*. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani. Ed. by Muhammad Wajih, A. Sprenger *et al.* Calcutta (Asiatic Society), 1856-88, 3 vols.
- JA *Famharat Ansab al-'Arab*. Abu Muhammad 'Ali b. Ahmad Ibn Hazm. MS. (Library of M. Z. Siddiqui)
- JASB *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Calcutta.
- JB I *Jami Bayan al-'Ilm w' Fadlihi*. Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd allah Ibn 'Ibd al-Barr. Cairo, n.d. 2 vols.
- JRAS *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. London.
- JT *Jami' al-'Tirmidhi* (with *Kitab al-Shama'il* and *Kitab al-'Ilal*). Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Tirmidhi. Delhi, 1315 A.H., 2 vols.
- JT2 —Delhi, 1350 A.H.
- JT (Ah) —With commentary (*Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*) by 'Abd al-Rahman Mubarakpuri. Delhi, 1346-1353 A.H., 4 vols.
- KAg *Kitab al-Aghani*. Abu al-Faraj Isbahani. Ed. by Ahmad al-Shinqiti. Cairo, 1323 A.H., 21 parts.
- KAS *Kitab al-Ansab*. 'Abd al-Karim b. Muhammad al-Sam'ani. with an intro. by D.S. Margoliouth. Leiden, 1912. E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series.
- KI *Kitab al-Imdad*. Jamal al-Din 'Abd Allah b. Salim al-Basri al-MakkI. Hyderabad (India), 1327 A.H.
- KIA *Ta'rikh al-Kamil*. Abu al-Hasan 'ali b. Muhammad Ibn al-Athir. Cairo, 1301 A.H.
- KIF *Kashshaf Istilahat al-Funun*. Muhammad 'Ali Tahanawi. Ed. by A. Sprenger. Calcutta, 1854.
- KK *Kitab al-Kamil*. Abu al-'Abbas Muhammad b. Yazid al-Mutarrad. Ed. by W. Wright. Leipzig, 1864., 2 vols. (12 parts)
- KKi *Kitab al-Kifayah*. al-Khatib al-Baghdadi. Published

with an intro. by Y. Eche. 1949.

- KQ *Kitab al-Wulat w' Kitab al-Qudat*. Abu 'Umar Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Kindi al-Misri. Leiden, 1912. E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series.
- KZ *Kashf al-Zunun*. Mustafa b. 'Abd Allah Haji Khalifah. Ed. by Gustav Flugel. Leipzig, 1835-42, 6 vols.
- LH *A Literary History of the Arabs*. Reynold A. Nicholson. Cambridge University, 1930.
- IM *Lisan al-Mizan*. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani. Hyderabad (India), 1929-31 A.H., 6 vols.
- LMu *Life of Mahomet*. William Muir. Ed. by T.H. Weir. Edinburg, 1912.
- Mhb *The Mahabharata*. Tr. into English by P.C. Roy. Calcutta, 1883.
- Mis *Mishkat al-Masabih*. Waliy al-Din Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Khatib al-'Umari al-Tibrizi. Lucknow, 1326 A.H.
- MAA *Muqaddimah* (to a Persian commentary on Mis.). 'Abd al-Haqq Dihlawi. Delhi, 1256 A.H.
- MAH *Musnad*. al-Imam Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Muhammad Ibn Hanbal. Ed. by Muhammad Ghamrawi. Egypt, 1313 A. H., 6 vols.
- MAH2 Ed. by Ahmad Muhammad Shakir. Cairo, 1949-55. (vols. i-xvi).
- MAT *Musnad*. Abu Da'ud al-Tayalisi. Hyderabad (India), 1321 A.H.
- MBn *Mu'jam al-Buldan*. Abu 'Abd Allah Yaqut b. 'Abd allah. Ed. by F. Wustendfeld. Leipzig, 1924, 6 vols.
- MFB *Muqaddimah Fath al-Bari*. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani. Delhi, 1302 A.H.
- MIt *Mizan al-I'tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal*. Shams al-Din al-Dhahabi. Egypt, 1325 A.H., 3 vols.
- MIS *'Ulum al-Hadith (Muqaddimah Ibn al-Salah)*. 'uthman b. 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Salah. Egypt, 1326 A.H.

- ML *al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyah*. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Qastallani. With a commentary by Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Baqi al-Zarqani. Egypt, 1291 A.H., 8 vols.
- MSn *Masabih al-Sunnah*. Husayn b. Mas'ud al-Shafi 'i al-Baghawi. Cairo, n.d. 2 vols.
- MSt *Muhammedanische Studien*. Ignaz Goldziher. Halle, 1889.
- MUd *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*. Abu 'Abd Allah Yaqut b. 'Abd Allah. Ed. by D.S. Margoliouth. 2nd ed. London, 1923-25.
- NA *Nur al-anwar* (commentary on *al-Manar*). Mulla Jiwan. Calcutta, 1359/1940.
- NS *Ta'rikh al-Nural-Safir 'an Akhbar al-Qarn al-'Ashir*. Muh'iy al-Din 'Abd al-Qadir al-'Aydarusi. Ed. by Muhammad Rashid al-Saffar. Baghdad, 1353 A.H.
- NSM Commentary on *Sahih Muslim*. Abu Zakariya Yahya al-Nawawi.
- NT *Nafh al-Tib*. Ahmad al-Maghribi al-Maqqari. Cairo, 1302 A.H.
- OIS *The Origins of the Islamic State*. (Tr. of FBn). Phillipp Hitti, Francis Clark Murgotten. Columbia University, 1924.
- OC *Culturgeschichte des Orients*. Von Kremer. Tr. (as *Orient under the Caliphs*) by S. Khuda Bakhsh. Calcutta University, 1920.
- OPC *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*. Patna, 1920 (vol. v, part 1) ; 1925 (vol. v, part 2) ; 1927 (vol. xii).
- QT *Qitf al-Thamar*. Salih. b. Muhammad 'Umari. Hyderabad (India), 1328 A.H.
- RAH *Reste Arabischen Heidentums*. J. Wellhausen. Berlin, 1897.

- RFUH *Risalah dar Fann-i-Usul-i-Hadith ('Ujalah-i-Nafi'ah).* Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz Dihlawi. Delhi, 1255 A.H.
- RSh *Risalah.* Al-Imam Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafi'i. Cairo, 1312 A.H.
- Sh *Der Imam el-Schafi'i : seine Schuler and Anhanger bis zum J.300 d.H.F.* Wustenfled. Gottingen, 1890.
- ShD *Shadharat al-Dhahab.* Abu al-Fida 'abd al-Ha'iy Ibn 'Imad al-Hanbali. Cairo, 1351 A.H., 8 vols.
- SAD *Sunan.* Abu Da'ud Sijistani. Ed. by 'Abd al Ahad. Delhi, 1346 A.H., 2 vols.
- SAP *Studies in Arabic and Persian Medical Literature.* Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi. Calcutta University, 1959.
- SB *Al-Jami' al-Sahih.* Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari. Ed. by Muhammad al-Zuhri. Egypt, 1309 A.H.
- SD *Sunan.* Abu Muhammad al-Darimi. Ed. by 'Abd al-Rashid al-Kashmiri. Kanpur, 1292-93 A.H.
- SDq *Sunan.* 'Ali b. 'Umar al-Daraqutni. Ed. by Shams al-Haqq 'Azimabadi. Delhi, n.d.
- SHM *Sahifah Hammam b. Munabbih.* Hammam b. Munabbih. Ed. by Hamidullah. 5th ed. Paris, 1380 A.H.
- SIM *Sunan.* Ibn Majah Qazwini. Delhi, 1313 A.H.
- SM *Sahih Muslim.* Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri. Delhi, 1309 A.H.
- SMT *Commentary on Imam Malik's Muwatta.* Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Baqi al-Zarqani. Egypt, 1310 A.H.
- SN *Sirat al-Nabi.* Shibli Nu'mani. A'zamgarh, 1339 A.H.
- SUA *Sirat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz.* 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Jauzi. Egypt, 1331 A.H.
- TA *Tahdhib al-Asma'.* Abu Zakariya Yahya al-Nawawi. Ed. by F. Wustenfled, Gottingen, 1842-47.



- TB *Ta'rikh Baghdad*. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Khatib al-Baghadi. Cairo, 1349 A.H., 14 vols.
- TBT *Ta'rikh Baghdad*. Tayfur Ahmad b. Abi Tahir. (Vol. vi) translated into German by H. Keller. Leipzig, 1908.
- TD *Ta'rikh Dimasq (al-Ta'rikh al-Kabir)*. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hassan Ibn al-'Asakir. Ed. by 'Abd al-Qadir Badran. Syria, 1332 A.H.
- TFA *Talqih Fuhum Ahl al-Athar*. 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-Jauzi. Ed. by Muhammad Yusuf Barelvi. Delhi, n.d.
- TH *Tabaqat al-Huffaz* : abridgement of TdH. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti. Ed. by F. Wustenfild. Gottingen, 1833.
- TdH *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*. Shams al Din Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Dhahabi. Ed. by Saiyid Mustafa 'Ali. Hyderabad (India), 1330 A.H. 4 vols.
- Tim *Taq'yid al-'Ilm*. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Khatib al-Baghadi. Ed. by Yusuf al-'Ishsh. Damascus, 1949.
- TI *The Traditions of Islam*. Alfred Guillaume. Oxford, 1924.
- TIS *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*. Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, Katib al-Waqidi. Ed. by Edward Sachau *et al.* Leiden, 1904-18.
- TK *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyah al-Kubra*. Taj al-Din Abu Nasr 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Subki. Egypt.
- TKh *Ta'rikh al-Khamis*. Husayn b. Muhammad Diyarbekri. Egypt, 1309 (?) A.H.
- TN *Taujih al-Nazar ila Usul al-Athar*. Tahir b. Salih al-Jaza'iri. Egypt, 1328 A.H.
- TR *Tadrib al-Rawi* (commentary on Abu Zakariya Yahya al-Nawawi's *al-Taqrif w'al-Taysir*). Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti. Egypt, 1307 A.H.
- TT *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani. Hyderabad

(India) 1326 A.H., 12 vols.

- UGH *Usd al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahabah*. 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir. Egypt, 1280 A.H., 5 vols.
- UH *Ma'rifat 'Ulum al-Hadith*. al-Hakim Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Nishapuri. Ed. by Mu'azzam Husayan. Cairo, 1937.
- WA *Wafayat al-A'yan*. Ibn Khallikan. Ed. by F. Wustefeld. Gottingen, 1835, 2 vols.
- YD *Yatimat al-Dahr*. Abu Mansur 'Abd al-Malik al-Tha'alibi. Egypt, 1352 A.H., 4 vols.
- ZDMG *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenlandischen Gesellschaft*. Leipzig.
- ZM *Zad al-Ma'ad*. Ibn Qayyim Jauziyyah. Kanpur, 1298 A.H.

## ***Introduction***

The history of the origin, development and criticism of *Hadith* Literature is an important as well as an interesting subject.

It is important, because it serves as a source of information on the history of pre-Islamic Arabia and of early Islam, and on the development of Arabic Literature as well as of Islamic thought in general and of Islamic law in particular. It also played an important part in establishing a common culture for the whole Islamic world.<sup>1</sup> It still wields a great influence on the minds of Muslims,<sup>2</sup> and is bound to influence them in the future also. It is interesting because it throws a flood of light on the psychology of the Traditionists—the pious as well as the forgers—and on many of the political and cultural movements which originated and developed in the various parts of the Muslim world throughout the past history of Islam. It also contains many fundamental ideas on democracy, the equality of all men and nations, the condemnation of aggression, the development of the power to defend oneself and the establishment of peace, in the world, and many other basic problems which agitate the minds of modern peoples.

The Muslims (since the life-time of their Prophet)<sup>3</sup> and the Western scholars and Orientalists (for about the last 200 years), have, therefore, taken a keen interest in *Hadith*, in *Hadith* Literature and in their criticism. During the time of the Prophet, his Companions eagerly learnt *Ahadith* from him. Many of them wrote them down, cultivated them, and spread them among their co-religionists. A large number of *Ahadith* were collected and spread throughout the vast Islamic empire, partly in writing, and partly orally, before the end of the first century of Hijra. During the following centuries, efforts were made to compile more or less exhaustive collections of *Ahadith* which were considered to be reliable, and long, arduous journeys were undertaken for this purpose.

Thus, partly in the second century of the Hijra, but largely in the third, important collections of such *Ahadith* as were considered to be reliable were compiled and published. As some *Ahadith* were forged during the life-time of the Prophet, care has been taken from that very period, to determine their reliability. To this end, the 'system of *Isnad* was introduced which was applied to *Hadith* at an early period not long after the beginning of the second century of Hijra, and was treated as a necessary part of every individual tradition. By and by, various branches of literature developed which served as foundations for the criticism of every individual *Hadith*. As the *Isnad* was not considered to be a sure guarantee of the genuineness of a *Hadith*, certain general principles were laid down by which to test the truth of its text. It has, however, been generally accepted by the traditionists that the truth of a tradition is determined by the faculty that is developed by the specialists in the subject, by means of long continuous study of traditions and by means of constant discussions about them with other specialists, and by acquiring a deep insight into them. All these matters have been discussed briefly in this book.

Western scholars have been taking a keen interest in *Hadith* collections as well as in other branches of literature connected with *Hadith*, for about 200 years. They have made a critical study of *Hadith*, edited and published many of the original Arabic works on these subjects, translated some of them into their own languages, and written learned treatises and critical articles on some of the intricate basic problems relating to *Hadith* literature. Some of them have published comprehensive and highly critical accounts of the origin and the development of the subject, discussed many fundamental problems relating to it, and described most of the important *Hadith* works, pointing out their merits and demerits. A brief account of their important contributions to the study of *Hadith* (uptill about 1920) has been given by D. Gustav Pfannmuller in his *Handbuch der Islam Literatur* (Berlin, Leipzig, 1923).

Of these, A. Sprenger, Edward E. Salisbury, O.V. Houdas, L. Krehl, I. Goldziher, T.W. Juynboll, J. Horovitz and A.J. Wensinck have made important contributions to the study of our subject, and W. Watt, J. Schacht, J. Robson and some others are still engaged in a keen, critical study of *Hadith* literature, and are making some important contributions to its history and criticism.

They have raised certain fundamental problems with regard to *Hadith* literature and its development, and have tried to solve them, applying modern methods of literary and historical criticism on the basis of their own research. The first Western scholar to do so was Sprenger, as he himself claimed. In the introduction to his *Das Leben und die Lehre des Muhammad*, he summarized the results of his research on *Hadith* literature. William Muir also discussed, in the introduction to his *Life of Muhammad*, the reliability of *Hadith*. But they were far surpassed in their treatment and criticism of *Hadith* literature by I. Goldziher, who was endowed by nature with a strong intellect and a keen critical faculty, and who had made a thorough study of Jewish and Christian literature. He chose Arabic language and literature in general, and *Hadith* literature in particular, as some of the special fields for his research. He published numerous learned articles, treatises and books on some of the collections of *Hadith* as well as on the history of the material and formal development of the subject. The most important of his works for our purpose is the second volume of the *Muhammedanische Studien*. In it, after a preliminary survey, Goldziher discusses the political, sectarian and cultural movements in Islamic history which influenced the material and formal development of *Hadith* literature. He deals with the important *Hadith* collections, and points out their merits and defects according to his own view. At the end of the book, he has also shown the influence of the New Testament as well as of the neo-Platonic and Gnostic ideas on our subject. His general conclusion is that *Hadith* literature does not represent the original ideas and ideals of the Prophet of Islam, but rather

reflects those of a much later period. It cannot, therefore, serve as a source for the ideas preached by Muhammad, but does provide an important source of information on the history of the development of the different aspects of Islamic culture of the later periods under foreign, non-Islamic influences.

Far more important than the contributions of Sprenger, Goldziher and others is the *Concordance and Indices of Muslim Tradition*, which is based upon the six canonical collections, the *Sunan* of al-Darimi, the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik and the *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal. It was originally planned by Juynboll, Wensinck, Horovitz and some other Orientalists, was patronized by the Royal Academy of Amsterdam, and aided by more than a dozen Academies and educational institutions of different countries. The work has been continued by de Haas, with the assistance of M. Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi and others. The actual work of preparing the Concordance was begun in 1916 and was continued by about 40 scholars of different countries. The first part of it was published in 1936, and the twenty-sixth part in 1961. It consists of all the important expressions occurring in the entire range of works mentioned above, in alphabetical order, personal names, etc., being reserved for the last parts. This huge work is of great and permanent value, and is sure to serve as a solid foundation for all the important future works on the various aspects of Arabic literature and of *Hadith* literature in particular.

Western scholars, however, have introduced into the study of *Hadith* the modern critical method of literary and historical research, and tried to show that *Hadith* literature in general is of apocryphal origin and doubtful character. They give the following reasons in support of their conclusions:—

(a) *Hadith* literature is largely based on mere oral transmission carried on for more than a century, and such of the *Hadith Collections* as we have received do not refer

to any records of *Ahadith* which may have been made at an earlier period.

(b) The number of *Ahadith* in the later collections is much larger than the number of those contained in the earlier collections or in the early works on Islamic law. This, according to them, shows that most of the *Ahadith* are of doubtful character.

(c) The *Ahadith* reported by the younger Companions are much larger in number than those related by the older Companions, which, they assert, shows that the *Isnads* attached to these *Ahadith* are not quite reliable.

(d) The system of *Isnad* was arbitrarily applied to *Hadith*: not earlier than the end of the first century of Hijra; and it is no proof of the genuineness of the tradition to which it attaches.

(e) Many of the *Ahadith* contradict one another.

(f) There is definite evidence of large-scale forgery of the *Isnad* as well as of the text of *Ahadith*.

(g) The Muslim critics confined their criticism of *Hadith* solely to *Isnad*, and never criticised their texts.

Many of these questions have been discussed in detail in chapters 1, VI and VIII of this book. Here only a brief comment upon them may be made :—

(a) It has already been shown by Goldziher that more than a dozen *Sahifahs* containing *Ahadith* of the Prophet were compiled by the Companions and the Followers. As for the want of reference to them in the later *Hadith* collections, it has been explained by A. Sprenger as being due to the fact that the early traditionists referred to the authors of the books they received through their own teachers, instead of referring to the books themselves, which were liable to have suffered from interpolation and forgery. He has demonstrated this with reference to the practice followed by Waqidi and Ibn Sa'd;<sup>4</sup> and has also collected a good deal of material on the writing down of *Hadith* and the existence of books in Arabic

during the pre-Islamic and the early Islamic period, in his article "On the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musalmans".<sup>2</sup> The publication of the *Sahifah* of Hammam b. Munabbih by Dr. Hamidullah, and the identification of its contents with that of a part of the *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal, with very slight differences, strongly supported the theory of Sprenger.

(b) The increase in the number of *Ahadith* in the later collections (of the 3rd century A.H.) may be appreciated by those who are conversant with the history of the collection of the *Ahadith*. The early compilers did not know as many traditions as were known to the later collectors. For, simultaneously with the expansion of the Islamic empire across various countries, the custodians of the *Ahadith* spread throughout these dominions. It was after the seekers of the *Ahadith* had travelled through all these countries (situated far apart from one another), and collected together the traditions known to each of the traditionists living there and narrated them to their own disciples, that larger collections of the *Ahadith* could be compiled during the second and the third centuries.

(c) It is thought by certain Western scholars that it would have been quite natural for those who associated with the Prophet of Islam for a long period to have reported more of his traditions than those who associated with him for a short period. But, actually, this was not so. The younger generation of the Companions reported a much larger number of traditions than the older Companions. From this critics conclude that the *Isnads* of the younger Companions were forged. But this question has already been considered by the traditionists themselves. They say that the older Companions passed away soon after the death of the Prophet, and, therefore, they could not report all the traditions known to them, whereas the younger Companions—e.g. Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Hurayra, 'A'ishah and others—lived for a much longer period, and could narrate to their students most of the traditions known to them. J. Fuck has pointed out that



this fact is in favour of the veracity of the traditionists; for if all the *Isnads* were forged by them, they would have tried to produce *Isnads* from the older Companions in larger numbers.<sup>5</sup> "That the traditionists did not do this", says Prof. Robson, "makes us wonder whether there may not be more truth than we have imagined in what they transmit."<sup>6</sup>

(d) As the *Isnad*, its origin, development and importance has been discussed in chapter VI of this book, and J. Robson has thoroughly dealt with the views of the Muslim doctors as well as those of all the Western scholars on it,<sup>7</sup> readers are referred to the observations contained in these sources.

(e) There is no doubt that a large number of the *Ahadith* are contradictory to one another. But to conclude from the contradictions between them, that at least most of them are forged is hardly warranted. It is natural for the leader of a great, progressive, fast-developing movement to change his instructions to his followers, at its various stages according to the requirements of the circumstances. Certainly, Islam was such a movement. One should not, therefore, be surprised if its leader issued at the various stages of its development, or even simultaneously, to his different followers, such instructions or recommendations as contradicted or differed from one another. The contradiction between the *Ahadith* prohibiting their writing down, and those permitting it, for example, has been explained by pointing out that the permissive *Ahadith*, being later in origin, cancelled the prohibitive ones. There is nothing particularly ingenious in this explanation. In certain cases, the contradictions have been explained by pointing out the different circumstances in which the contradictory instructions were given. In various other cases, the contradictions have been explained by pointing out the ideas they had in common which were expressed in various ways at different times. There are, of course, cases in which *Ahadith* were forged, contradicting the import of the genuine ones, as has been pointed out by the Muslim doctors. But one may be surprised to find that certain Western scholars have quoted *Ahadith* which have been

declared by Muslim authorities on the subject to be forgeries in order to prove contradictions between them.

(f) The large-scale forgery of *Isnads* as well as of the texts of traditions, either in their entirety or in part, has been accepted by all the Muslim doctors, and has been described at length in chapter VI of this book. The development of considerable literature on the *Maudu'at* is sure and sufficient evidence of it. The *Ahadith* contained in them are discarded by the traditionists. But one may be surprised to find that certain Western scholars have used them not only to show the tendency of the minds of the Muslims at any particular period, but also to prove that *Hadith* literature in general is unreliable. In this connection, they have also interpreted some *Ahadith* differently from the Muslim traditionists, and at times they have declared such *Ahadith* as are accepted by the traditionists as genuine, to have been forged, (on account of their own baseless presumptions). Here are some examples of each of them :—

(f)1. To cast doubt on the reliability of Hadith texts, Goldziher<sup>8</sup> and (following him) Guillaume<sup>9</sup> used the following quotation from a *Hadith* al-Tirmidhi<sup>10</sup> : “Ibn ‘Umar reported that Muhammad had ordered all dogs to be killed, save sheep-dogs and hounds. Abu Hurayra added the word *au Zar'in* (or field dogs.) Whereupon Ibn ‘Umar made the remark that Abu Hurayra owned cultivated land, and that a better illustration of the underlying motives of some *Hadith* could hardly be found.” Goldziher observes that the remark made by Ibn ‘Umar proves that even the earliest transmitters were not free from selfish motives. But the Muslim traditionists have explained this remark to mean that Abu Hurayra, having a personal interest in the subject-matter of the *Hadith*, had better reason to know exactly what its wording was.<sup>11</sup> Hence it shows the greater authority of Abu Hurayra on this *hadith* than that of Ibn ‘Umar himself.

(f)2. Goldziher<sup>12</sup> and (following him) Guillaume<sup>13</sup> assert that the *Hadith* reported by al-Bukhari: “Make a journey (for pilgrimage) only to three places—al-Masjid al-Haram, the

Mosque of the Prophet, and the Mosque of Jerusalem" was forged by al-Zuhri in order to help `Abd al-Malik against his rival, `Abd Allah b. Zubayr. But J. Fuck remarks that this assertion is chronologically unsound. Ibn al-Zubayr was killed in 73 A.H., and Zuhri was born in 51 A.H. or even later. He must, therefore, have been too young at the time of Ibn al-Zubayr's death to have become an authority on traditions. This assertion is wrong also, because the authority of al-Zuhri on this *Hadith* (the famous Sa'id b. al-Musaiyib, who died in 94 A.H.) was still living, and, therefore, his name could not have been misused by al-Zuhri. Again, al-Zuhri is not the only traditionist who reported this tradition from Sa'id.<sup>14</sup>

(f)3. Here is another glaring example of unfounded assertion by one of the greatest of the Western scholars of *Hadith*, Goldziher. He asserts that after the fabrication of *Hadith* had become a common and established practice among the traditionists, they tried to stop it by forging a *Hadith* that prohibited forgery. The well-known *hadith* (in which the Prophet is reported to have said that he who falsely attributed anything to them made his abode in Hell) and other similar traditions were, according to Goldziher, fabricated in order to stop fabrication.<sup>15</sup> But this *Hadith* has been reported by more than 70 Companions and numerous independent chains of authorities. It is found in different forms in all the important *Hadith* collections, and has been accepted by all the traditionists as one of the most reliable traditions. There is absolutely no reason to doubt its authenticity. Fabrications were made in the name of the Prophets before Muhammad, of which he was aware, and to which reference is made in the Qur'an. Forged traditions were attributed to Muhammad himself during his life-time. In these circumstances, it may well be expected that the great Leader should warn his followers against this dangerous practice. Goldziher knew all these facts. Still he asserted that these *Ahadith* were forged ones—without giving any reason whatsoever. And Guillaume has followed him in the same fashion.<sup>16</sup>

(g) It is true that in all the *Muasnnaf* collections of *Ahadith*, they are arranged in books and chapters according to their subject-matter, and at the end of each *Hadith* is added a short description of its *Isnad* in technical terms, and notice is taken of the character of its text. But in their commentaries, the texts of the *Ahadith* also are criticised by the traditionists. The criticism follows the principles laid down by the traditionists. These principles and their illustrations (from a commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari* and from some other works on traditions) are given in the last chapter of this book. It appears, however, that the function of the collection of the *Ahadith* and of their formal criticism (the criticism of the *Isnad*) was reserved for their collectors, whereas the function of their material criticism (the criticism of the text) was left for the Jurists and the commentators of the various collections.

According to the Muslim critics, the *Isnad* is good evidence, but not an absolute guarantee of the truth of the text of the traditions. And if the text of a tradition is contrary to reason and common experience, or to the explicit text of the Qur'an, or to the text of the *Mutawatir* traditions, or to the Consensus, it is a proof of its having been forged. These and other principles of the criticism of the text of Hadith (which are described near the end of this book) compare favourably with the criteria laid down by William Muir<sup>1</sup> and other Western scholars for judging the reliability of traditions.

In conclusion, it must be added that in this book no attempt has been made to deal with the Shi'ah traditions, for the present writer does not consider himself qualified for it.

### Notes

1. This has been shown by Prof. J. Fuck in his learned article, "Die Rolle des Traditionalismus im Islam", ZDMG, 1939, pp. 1-32.
2. TI, Preface, 6.
3. The thesis of Schacht (in OMJ) that Hadith were not accepted as an authority until the time of al-Shafi'i is refuted by the general acceptance by all the traditionists as well as the Orientalists of the fact that not long

after the Prophet's death a large number of traditions were forged by all the political, sectarian and other Muslim parties in support of what they asserted. For if Hadith were not accepted by all the Muslims as an authority, there would have been no sense in forging *Ahadith* for any purpose.

4. JASB, vol. XXV, p. 62 (2) *Ibid.* pp. 303-329 and 375-381.
5. ZDMG, 1939, p. 17.
6. *The Isnad in Muslim Tradition*, p. 26.
7. *Ibid.*
8. MSt, ii, 49.
9. TI, 78
10. JT, i, 281.
11. JT (Ah), ii, 350.
12. MSt, ii, 35.
13. TI, 47-48,
14. ZDMG, 1939 pp. 23f,
15. MSt, ii, 131 ff.
16. TI, 78f.

# CHAPTER I

## ***Hadith: Importance, Origin and Development***

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HADITH

The word *hadith* primarily means 'new'. It is used as opposed to *qadim* which means 'old'. From this followed the use of the term for a piece of news, a tale, a story or a report—be it historical or legendary, true or false, relating to the present or to the past, immediate or remote. In this sense the word has been used by the pre-Islamic poets, and in the Qur'an and the Tradition of the Prophet. The story-tellers also were called *Huddiath*.

This general connotation of the word *hadith* has, like that of many other words (e.g. *salat*, *sujud*, *ruku'*, *zakat*, etc.), been changed under the far-reaching influence of Islam. The Muslims since the very life-time of Muhammad called the reports of his sayings and doings the best *hadith*, and by and by, its use was confined solely to the reports of Muhammad's words and deeds.

Muhammad himself, as well as his immediate followers, used it in this sense more than once. When Muhammad said to Abu Hurayra that he knew his anxiety about the *Hadith*,<sup>1</sup> he meant only his own *Hadith*. 'Utba referred solely to this kind of *Hadith*, when he said that Ibn 'Abbas related only two or three *Ahadith* in a month<sup>2</sup>. 'Umar I meant only the *Hadith*<sup>3</sup> of Muhammad, when he asked his friends not to relate too many *Ahadith*.<sup>4</sup> When 'Ali said : "If you write *Hadith*, write them with the *Isnad*," he meant the *Hadith* of Muhammad only.<sup>5</sup>

## HADITH AND SUNNAH

Very closely connected with this significance of the word *Hadith* is the connotation of the word *Sunnah*, which originally meant 'precedent' and 'custom'<sup>6</sup>, and which has been used by the Muslims solely for the doings and practices of Muhammad. Some of the Muslim writers, as Goldziher says,<sup>7</sup> have completely identified the significance of these two philologically un-connected words; others have drawn a line of distinction between them, but this is only theoretical, as has been pointed out by him.

## HADITH—A SUBJECT OF KEEN INTEREST

The *Hadith* in this sense—i.e., the report of the sayings and doings of Muhammad—have been a subject of keen interest among Muslims ever since the life-time of the Prophet himself. His remarkable, stirring career could not have failed to draw the serious attention of his people. Having lived forty years in a quiet, almost uneventful way, he started one of the most stirring and greatest movements which influenced all the various aspects of human thought and life for all time, and he achieved his objective with astounding success. At the very beginning of his life as a prophet, he struck at the very root of the firm beliefs and the long-established customs of the pagan Arabs. They hated and boycotted him, insulted and injured him, and compelled him to leave his home and hearth for a distant town. But, by his implicit faith in his cause, his tenacity of purpose and his never failing zeal for his mission, within ten years of his exile, he destroyed the established prestige of the Quraysh of Mecca, shook the foundations of the pagan customs and the heathen beliefs of the Arabs, humbled their boastful tribal chiefs, persuaded the Christians of Najran to come to terms with him, demolished the strongholds of the Jews in Arabia, and founded a theocracy which was destined to cross swords simultaneously and successfully with the tremendous, well-equipped and highly trained armies of Persia and Byzantium,

and to influence the thought and life of mankind for ever.

Such a career was bound to attract the attention of the people who witnessed it. Muhammad, with his many-sided activities and revolutionary utterances, could not have passed unobserved and unnoticed by the people among whom he lived and moved. At least, since the time he began to preach his mission, both his deadly foes and his faithful and devoted friends must have been equally interested in him, as well as in his sayings and doings.

To his enemies he had been a revolutionary bent upon destroying the whole fabric of their society, whose activities they keenly watched in order to stop the progress of his mission. His utterances must have given them important topics for reflection, conversation and sometimes even heated discussions. They watched his movements so closely and carefully that many of his secretly conceived plans could not escape their watchful eyes. Their leader, Abu Lahab, kept close to him when he preached his faith to the Arabian tribes, and dissuaded them from paying any attention to his peaceful preachings.<sup>8</sup> They discovered his plans when his followers were migrating from Arabia to Abyssinia. They followed close on their heels in order to prevent them from getting out of their clutches.<sup>9</sup> They found out that he had talked with the people of Madinah, conversing with them in secret, and threatened the Madinites with open hostility if they continued their friendship with him.<sup>10</sup>

The interest of the followers of Muhammad in him and in his sayings and doings was naturally greater than that of his foes. They had accepted him as their sole guide and prophet, completely identifying themselves with him in his struggle against the Quraysh and the other tribes. With his future and with the future of the faith revealed to him was bound up their own future. On his success depended their own success. All his actions served them as a precedent (*sunnah*), and every word falling from his lips was a law to them; all his actions were virtuous in their eyes, and they wanted to follow them as faithfully as they could. When he



chose a gold ring for himself, his friends also put one on; and when he took it off, threw it away, and put on a silver ring instead, they also followed his example.<sup>11</sup> If he offered prayers at midnight, all his friends wanted to do the same, and he himself had to stop them from so doing.<sup>12</sup> If he fasted continuously for more than a day, his followers also desired to do the same, and he had to explain to them his special privileges.<sup>13</sup> Zayd b. Khalid spent one whole night at his door in order to see him offer his night prayers.<sup>14</sup> Nawwas b. Sam'an stayed at Madinah for one whole year in order to enquire from Muhammad what virtue was and what vice was.<sup>15</sup> Abu Sa'id al-Khudri zealously observed how long he kept standing during his afternoon prayers.<sup>16</sup> Ibn 'Umar counted how many times he asked pardon of God in one sitting.<sup>17</sup>

The *Hadith* in this sense of the reports of the sayings and doings of Muhammad have been a subject of keen pursuit and constant study by Muslims throughout the Muslim world since the very beginning of the history of Islam up to the present times. During the life-time of Muhammad, many of his Companions tried to learn by heart whatever he said, and keenly observed whatever he did; and they reported these things to one another. Some of them wrote down what he said in *Sahifas*, which were later on read by them to their students, and which were preserved in their families and also by the Followers (*Tabi'un*). After the death of Muhammad, when his Companions spread out over various countries, some of them as well as their followers undertook long arduous journeys, courting poverty and penury in order to collect them and put them together. They founded independent branches of literature which would help them in understanding the *Hadith* of their prophet and in testing their reliability and genuineness. They deduced various theological sciences from them. Their remarkable activity with regard to the preservation and propagation of *Hadith* is unique in the literary history of the world. The stage of perfection up to which they developed the system of *Isnad*

in Hadith, the vast literature on the *Asma al-Rijal* which they created as an aid to the formal criticism of the Traditions, the literature on the *Usul al-Hadith*, which serves as an aid to their material criticism, and the literature on the *Maudu'at*, which deals with what has been forged and fabricated in the name of Muhammad, remain unparalleled in the literary history of the world even to-day.

The Companions of Muhammad had so much respect and reverence for him that one of them collected his perspiration, and made a will that it should be sprinkled on his dead body before it was put into the grave.<sup>18</sup> Some of them vied and sometimes even quarrelled with one another in order to get the water left by him after performing his ablution, and considered it a privilege to drink it or to apply it to their bodies.<sup>19</sup> Some of them carefully preserved what was touched by him and used it as a cure for diseases.<sup>20</sup> Some presented to him their children for his blessings and some considered it a privilege if their sons were accepted by him as his attendants.<sup>21</sup>

#### THE WRITING OF AHADITH

Many of these devoted Companions of Muhammad, if not all of them, naturally hankered after the knowledge of what he said or did. Abu Hurayra kept his constant company for three years at the sacrifice of all worldly pursuits in order to see and hear what he did and said,<sup>22</sup> and regularly devoted considerable time to learning by heart what he had heard from him.<sup>23</sup> 'Abd Allah b. 'amr b. al-'As wrote down all that he heard from Muhammad.<sup>24</sup> Abu Shihab, Zayd and Ziyad also did the same.<sup>25</sup> 'Azib, when asked by Abu Bakr to deliver his message to al-Bara', did not leave his company until he had related to him what he and Muhammad had done when they came out of Mecca and were followed by the Quraysh.<sup>26</sup> 'Uma b. al-Khattab, who was living at a distance from Madinah and was unable to attend to Muhammad every day, made an agreement with one of the

Ansar that they would attend him every alternate day and report to each other whatever they saw or heard from him.<sup>27</sup> Some other of his followers as failed to notice any of his sayings or doings (on account of being away from him) learnt the same from those who had heard them, taking great care about the veracity of their reporters. As a matter of fact, it is said to have been a common practice among the friends of Muhammad that whenever any two of them met, one of them would enquire from the other whether there were any *Hadith* (the news of the sayings and the doings of the Prophet), and the other in his reply would report some sayings and doings of the Prophet.<sup>28</sup> This practice seems to have been in vogue at least among certain Muslim scholars even as late as the end of the 8th century (A.H.), when Isma'il 'Aquli of Baghdad, on meeting Ibrahim of Aleppo, asked him after the customary salutations, whether he knew any *Hadith*. The latter in answer recited some *Ahadith* from the *Sahih al-Bukhari* with their *Isnads*.<sup>29</sup>

Muhammad himself attached a good deal of importance to the knowledge of his own *Hadith*. He asked his friends and followers to make them as widely known as possible, taking care that they should not attribute anything to him falsely.<sup>30</sup> He asked his followers to acquire knowledge and teach it to others;<sup>31</sup> and while explaining knowledge, he included in it the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. The course of study prescribed by him to the *Ashab al-Suffa* included the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and the art of writing.<sup>32</sup> In the appointment of the state officials also, he gave preference to those who combined the knowledge of the *Sunnah* with that of the Qur'an. Such was the case with the appointment of the *Imams*<sup>33</sup> and the *Qadis*, and is likely to have been true of other appointments also. He asked Mu'adh when the latter was going out as governor of Yemen on what basis he would govern. "On the basis of the Qur'an", Mu'adh replied. "Suppose", said the Prophet, "that you do not find it in the Qur'an." "Then on the basis of the *Sunnah*," answered Mu'adh.<sup>34</sup>

After the death of Muhammad, the importance of *Hadith* grew greater and greater. Von Kremer rightly says: "The life of the Prophet, his discourses and utterances, his actions, his silent approval and even his passive conduct, constituted next to the Qur'an the second most important source of law for the young Muslim empire."<sup>35</sup> Von Kremer has correctly pointed out the importance of the *Hadith* as a source of Muhammadan law. But actually the part played by it in the development of Arabic literature is much greater than this. It is the *Hadith* and the Qur'an that have been the main cause of the flowering of many branches of Arabic literature, eg., history, geography, the collection of the ancient Arabian poetry, lexicography, etc. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the *Hadith* and the Qur'an had been the basis for all the scientific activities of the Arabs.

Thus, the *Hadith*, originating in the early life of the Prophet of Islam, developed largely throughout his life, and spread simultaneously with the spread of Islam throughout the vast Muslim dominions. The Muslim armies, which conquered Syria, Palestine, Persia and Egypt, included a large number of the Companions of Muhammad, who carried his *Hadith* wherever they went. Even the distant lands of North Africa and Spain<sup>36</sup> received reports of Muhammad's sayings and doings before the end of the first century, A.H. Similarly, the message of the *Sunnah* and the Qur'an had been received by India before its conquest by Muslims before the end of the first century, A.H.<sup>37</sup>

#### THE COLLECTION OF AHADITH

*Hadith*, which thus spread throughout the vast Muslim dominions, had been preserved for about a century, partly in writing (in the form of laws and letters dictated by Muhammad himself, and in the form of various *Sahifahs* ascribed to many of his Companions), and partly in the memory of those who had associated with him and carefully noted his words and deeds. After the death of Muhammad,

'Umar I intended to collect the *Ahadith*. He gave the matter his careful consideration for one whole month, invoking the help of God in his decision, and seeking the advice of his friends. But he had to give up this great project for fear of the Qur'an being neglected by the Muslims.<sup>38</sup>

Umar II (61-101 A.H.), the saintly caliph of the dynasty of the worldly Umayyads, initiated and partly carried out the tremendous task which had only been thought of by his great predecessor, whom he tried to follow in many respects. This saintly caliph had great zeal for his religion, which he tried to purify of the evils that had crept into it by the time he came to power.<sup>39</sup> The teaching and the collection of *hadith* naturally formed an important part of his plan. He appointed paid teachers to teach the Qur'an to the ignorant Bedouins,<sup>40</sup> supported and helped the teachers and students of *Fiqh*,<sup>41</sup> sent instructions to the governor of the Hijaz that weekly lectures should be delivered on *Hadith*,<sup>42</sup> and sent out men well-versed in the subject to Egypt and North Africa as instructors to the Muslims living in those countries.<sup>43</sup>

Fearing the loss of *Ahadith*, he took steps towards their collection. He wrote to the great Traditionist, Abu Bakr b. Muhammad b. Hazm (d. 100/719), who lived in Madinah, to ask him to write down all the *Ahadith* of the Prophet and of 'Umar—particularly those he could learn from 'Amra, the daughter of 'Abd al-Rahman, who was at that time the best custodian of such *Ahadith* as were related by 'A'ishah.<sup>44</sup> 'Umar II is also reported to have asked Sa'd b. Ibrahim<sup>45</sup> and Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri<sup>46</sup> to collect *Ahadith* in the form of books in order to have them circulated throughout his dominion. According to Abu Nu'aym's *History of Isfahan* (cited by Ibn Hajar),<sup>47</sup> 'Umar even wrote a circular letter asking the Traditionists living in the various parts of his dominion to collect in the form of books as many *Ahadith* as were available.<sup>48</sup>

The fact that these works have not been mentioned by any of the later writers on the subject, and that there appear to be some contradictions in later references to the persons

concerned, has led an eminent Orientalist to hold that what has been attributed to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz in connection with the collection of *Ahadith* is only an expression of what the Muslims would expect from the pious caliph.<sup>49</sup> But another eminent Orientalist, Dr. Sprenger, had already shown<sup>50</sup> that the early Muslim writers used to refer to the authors instead of referring to the books. As regards the contradictions, they are only apparent, and can be easily explained. Therefore, it is not merely an expression of what later Muslims expected from the pious caliph; as a matter of fact, all the attending circumstances point to the authenticity of what is attributed to him.

The great work initiated by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz was helped by the spirit of the age, and was far-reaching in its influence. Abu Qalaba (d. 104 or 107 A.H.) is stated to have made a will of his books<sup>51</sup>. Makhul (d. 116/734), who had travelled through Egypt and Syria and had lived for some time in Madinah in order to acquire knowledge at all these places,<sup>52</sup> wrote a book on the *Sunnah* which has been mentioned by Ibn al-Nadim in his *Fihrist*<sup>53</sup>. Al-Zuhri (d. 124/742) is stated by Ibn Sa'd to have collected so many *Ahadith* that, after his death, his manuscripts needed beasts of burden for their removal.<sup>54</sup>

The early students and workers on the *Hadith* were followed by various *Muhaddithin*, who carried on the work begun by their predecessors almost simultaneously in various provinces of the vast Muslim empire. Of these collectors of *Ahadith*, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Jurayj (d. 150/760) worked at Mecca, Sa'd b. 'Aruba (d. 157 A.H.) in Mesopotamia, al-Auza'i (d. 159 A.H.) in Syria, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman (d. 159 A.H.) at Madinah, Za'ida b. Qudama (d. 160 A.H.) and Sufyan al-Thauri (d. 160 A.H.) at Kufa, and Hammad b. Salama (d. 165 A.H.) at Basra.<sup>55</sup>

As almost all these works have been irretrievably lost, no opinion can be expressed on their plan, method or merit. But Ibn al-Nadim, who mentions these works, has also given a short criticism in each case. He refers to the writings of

Ibn Jurayj, Ibn 'Aruba, Auza'i, Ibn 'Abd al-Rahman and Za'ida b. Qudama as works on the *Sunnah*, and says that they are arranged like books of *Fiqh*—in chapters devoted to its problems. They were probably works of the same type as the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik, who might have followed in its general plan system adopted by some of these earlier writers. Two of the books of Sufyan al-Thauri, however, which were discussed by various scholars, were works of a different type. About one of them Ibn al-Nadim says that it is similar to *hadith* works.<sup>56</sup> But this also has been lost.

### THE MUWATTA

The earliest work connected with our subject which has been received by us is the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik, which has been fully described and criticised by Goldziher.<sup>57</sup> He is of the opinion that the *Muwatta* is not a work on *Hadith* in the same sense in which the *Sahih al-Bukhari* and other later works are. "It is", says he, "a *corpus juris*, and not a *corpus traditionum*. Its object was not to shift the *Ahadith* current in the Muslim world and to make a collection of them, but to demonstrate the religious laws, rituals and practices which were in keeping with the *Sunnah* prevalent in Madinah, and which were in agreement with the *Ijma`* accepted by the Muslims of Madinah, and to produce on the basis of the *Ijma`* and the *Sunnah* a theoretical standard for doubtful cases."

In order to prove his theory, Goldziher has quoted the fact that Imam Malik has included in his work a large number of *Tatwas* and customs in vogue in Madinah, without trying to prove them by reference to *Hadith*; that even in quoting the *Ahadith* he has not given the *Isnad* in all cases, and that he has not made any mention of such *Ahadith* as are purely historical in character.

These facts certainly show that the *Muwatta* was not intended to serve as a collection of *Ahadith*. But it may be said with equal justice that it is not a book of *Fiqh* in the same sense in which later works are said to be so. It contains

a very large number of *Hadith al-ahkam* (legal traditions). According to Zarqani, as Goldziher has pointed out, there are in it 1720 *Ahadith*, of which 600 contain *Isnads*, 222 are *mursal*, 613 are *mawquf*, and 285 stop either at a *Sahabi* or at a *Tabi'i* (i.e. are either *mawquf* or *maqtu'*)<sup>58</sup>. According to al-Ghafiqi, the total number of *Ahadith* in the twelve versions of the *Muwatta* is 666, out of which 97 differ in the different versions of the book, and the rest are common in all the various recensions.<sup>59</sup> The great difference between al-Zarqani's and al-Ghafiqi's estimates seems to be due to the latter's not taking into account the versions of the *Muwatta* by al-Shaybani and others<sup>60</sup>. Originally, however, the number of *Ahadith* in the *Muwatta* is reported to have been between 4,000 and 10,000, which were reduced by the author himself to about 1,000.<sup>61</sup>

The *Muwatta* may be treated as a good collection of *Ahadith* in the sense of legal traditions. Some Muslim authorities, like 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and 'Abd al-Haq of Delhi, include it instead of the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja in the six canonical collections. Of course the majority of them do not count it as one of the six books, because almost all the important traditions contained in it are included in the *Sahihs* of Bukhari and Muslim.

On the analogy of the *Muwatta*, however, we may reasonably assume that the other *Sunan* works, compiled before or simultaneously with it also contained a fair proportion of the *hadith al-Ahkam*, and might therefore be treated like the *Muwatta* as *Hadith* works.

#### THE LEGAL AND HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

Since the earliest times the Muslims have made a distinction between legal traditions (*Hadith al-Ahkam*) and purely historical traditions (the *Maghazi*). In the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd some Companions are described as being well-versed in *Fiqh* (Law) while others are stated to be authorities on the *Maghazi* (historical traditions). In the treatment of the



legal traditions they had been careful and critical; whereas in relating the historical traditions they were rather free. Suhayb, a Companion, used to say : "Come along, I will tell you the tales of our battles (*Maghazi*), but I will not relate to you that the Prophet has said such and such things."<sup>62</sup> Sa'ib b. Yazid heard Talha relate the tales of the battle of Uhud, whereas he did not hear other Companions relate any *Hadith* of the Prophet<sup>63</sup>. From these and other similar reports it appears that the *Maghazi* served the early Muslims as topic of general conversation. But with the legal traditions they had been careful and scrupulous, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The word *Fiqh* itself had been used sometimes in the sense of *Hadith*. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, after relating a *Hadith*, points out that here the word *Fiqh* is used in the sense of *Hadith*<sup>64</sup>. As a matter of fact, the Islamic law in its earliest period consisted of little other than the legal traditions (*Hadith al-Ahkam*). Therefore, all such Companions as are reported to have related the largest number of *Ahadith*, e.g. 'A'ishah, Ibn Mas'ud, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, are described as *Faqihs*.

The number of legal traditions appears to be rather small. Muhibb al-Din al-Tabari has mentioned only 1029 of them in his *al-Ahkam al-Sughra*, which is devoted wholly to legal traditions.<sup>65</sup> Hafiz 'Abd al-Ghani in his *'Umdat al-Ahkam* has mentioned only 500 of them.<sup>66</sup> Ibn Hajar in his *Bulugh al-Maram* has quoted about 1338 of them.<sup>67</sup> Ibn Taymiyah (Majd al-Din) in his *Muntaqa* has of course quoted a much larger number. But he has often treated the sayings and doings of the Companions also as *Hadith*, and sometimes he treats the various versions of the same *Hadith* as independent ones.<sup>68</sup>

#### CLASSIFICATION OF BOOKS OF HADITH

Books of *Hadith* have been classified into the following groups :—

1. *Sahifas*.
2. *Ajza'*.
3. *Rasa'il or Kutub*.
4. *Musannafs*.
5. *Musnads*.
6. *Mu'jams*.
7. *Jami's*.
8. *Sunans*.
9. *Mustadraks*.
10. *Mustakhrajs*.
11. *Arba'iniyat*.

1. The *Sahifas* are such collections of the sayings of the Prophet as were written down by some of his Companions during his life-time or by their followers in the next generation. Several of these *Sahifas* have been mentioned by Goldziher according to whom some are also described as *Rasa'il* and as *Kutub*.<sup>69</sup> One of them, which was collected by Abu Hurayra and taught and handed down by him to his student, Hammam b. Munabbih, has been edited by Dr. Hamidullah.<sup>70</sup> But the most important of them is the *Sahifa*, which was collected by 'Abd Allah b. 'amr b. al-'As, who gave it the title of *al-Sadiqah*.<sup>71</sup>

2. The *Ajza'* are such collections of the Traditions as have been handed down on the authority of one single individual—whether a Companion or of any subsequent generation. The term *Juz'* is also applied to such collections of *Ahadith* as have been compiled on a particular subject-matter—e.g. "Intention", the Vision of God, etc.<sup>72</sup>

3. The *Rasa'il* are such collections of *Ahadith* as deal with one particular topic out of eight topics into which the contents of the *fami'* books of *hadith* may be generally classified.

These topics are :—

- i. Beliefs or Dogma.
- ii. Laws, or *Ahkam*, which are also known as *Sunan* and

include all the subjects of *Fiqh* from *Taharat*, or Purity, to *Wasaya*, or Exhortations.

- iii. *Ruqaq*, i.e. Piety, Asceticism, Mysticism.
- iv. Etiquette in eating, drinking, travelling, etc.
- v. *Tafsir*, or commentary on the Qur'an.
- vi. *Ta'rikh* and *Siyar*, i.e. historical and biographical matters which include (a) cosmology, ancient history, etc. and (b) the lives of the Prophet, of his Companions and Successors.
- vii. *Fitan*, i.e. crises.
- viii. Appreciation (*Manaqib*) and denunciation (*Mathalib*) of persons, places, etc.

The *Rasa'il* are also called Books (*Kutub*). To this class belong many of the works of Ibn Hajar, al-Suyuti, and others.<sup>73</sup>

4. *Musannafs* are those large collections of *Ahadith* in which the traditions relating to most or all of the various topics mentioned above are put together and arranged in various books or chapters, each dealing with a particular topic. To this class belong the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik, the *Sahih* of Muslim, etc.

5. The term *Musnad* (supported) was originally used for such traditions as were supported by a complete and uninterrupted chain of authorities (*Isnad*) going back to a Companion, who was directly associated with the Prophet.<sup>74</sup> But later on the term came to be used in the general sense of a reliable and authoritative tradition. In this sense the term is also used for all reliable works in *Hadith* literature: works like the *Sunan* of al-Darimi and the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari are called *Musnads*. But technically it is used only for those collections of *Ahadith* in which they are arranged according to the names of the final authorities by whom they are related, irrespective of their subject matter. Such are the *Musnads* of Abu Da'ud Tayalisi (d. 204/819), Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 233/847), 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi

Shayba (d. 235/849), 'Uthman b. Abi Shayba (d. 237/851), Abu Khaythama (d. 234/844) and others.<sup>75</sup> One who collected *Ahadith* in the form of a *Musnad* is called a *Musnid* or a *Musnidi*.<sup>76</sup> The *Musnad* works themselves, however, differ in detail in the arrangement of the authorities who originally related them. In some of them they are arranged in the alphabetical order of their names. In some of them they are arranged according to their relative merit in the acceptance of Islam and in taking part in the early important events of the Prophet's mission. In some of them they are arranged according to the affinity of their tribe to the Prophet.<sup>77</sup>

There are, however, certain *Musnad* works which are divided into chapters devoted to various subjects, and in each chapter the *Ahadith* are arranged according to the original authorities, Companions, by whom they were related. This plan is followed by Abu Ya'la<sup>78</sup> (d. 276/889) and Abu'Abd al-Rahman in their *Musnad* works.<sup>79</sup> These works combine the characteristics of the *Musnad* and of the *Musannaf* works.

Some of the *Musnad* compilers, however, tried to collect together all the available traditions reported by the various Companions.<sup>80</sup> The *Musnad* of Ibn al-Najjar is said to have contained the traditions related by all the Companions. The *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal contains more than 30,000 traditions reported by about 700 Companions.<sup>81</sup> The *Musnad* of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman is reported by Haji Khalifah on the authority of Ibn Hazm to have contained traditions related by 1300 Companions.<sup>82</sup> There are, however, many *Musnad* works which are devoted to traditions related either by a special group of Companions or by one single Companion only.

6. The term *Mu'jam* is generally applied to such works on various subjects as are arranged in alphabetical order. The geographical and the biographical dictionaries of Yaqut are called *Mu'jam al-Buldan* and *Mu'jam al-Udaba*, because they are arranged alphabetically. Such *Musnad* collections of *Ahadith* as are arranged under the names of the Companions in their alphabetical order are also known as *Mu'jam*

*al-Sahaba*. But according to the authorities on the science of Tradition, the term is used technically only for such collections of *Ahadith* as are arranged not according to the Companions who reported them, but according to the Traditionists from whom the compiler himself received them. The names of such Traditionists (*Shuyukh*) are arranged alphabetically,<sup>83</sup> and all the traditions received from each *Shaykh* are then collected together, irrespective of their contents or subject matter. To this class belong two of the collections of al-Tabarani (260/870-360/970) and the collections of Ibrahim b. Isma'il (d. 371/981) and Ibn al-Qani' (d. 350/960).<sup>84</sup> The largest collection by al-Tabarani is in reality a *Musnad* work, not a *Mu'jam* work; for it is a *Mu'jam al-Sahaba*, not a *Mu'jam al-Shuyukh*.

7. *Jami'* are those collections of *Ahadaith* which contain traditions relating to all the various topics mentioned under the *Rasa'il*. Thus, the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari as well as the book of Tirmidhi is called *Jami'*. But the *Sahih* of Muslim is not described as *Jami'*, because (unlike Bukhari) it does not contain traditions relating to all the chapters of the Qur'an.

8. *Sunan* are such collections of the traditions as contain *Ahadiih al-ahkam* (legal traditions) only, and leave out those traditions which relate to historical and other matters. Thus the collections of traditions made by 'Abu' Da'ud, Nasa', and many other traditionists are known as *Sunan* works.

9. *Mustadraks* are collections of *Ahadith* in which the compiler, having accepted the conditions laid down by any previous compiler, collects together such other traditions as fulfil those conditions but were missed by the previous compiler. To this class belongs the *Mustadrak* of al-Hakim who collected together such *Ahadith* as fulfilled the conditions laid down by al-Bukhari and Muslim but were not included by them in their *Sahihs*.

10. *Mustakhraj* are those collections of *Ahadith* in which a later compiler of them collects together fresh *Isnads* for such traditions as were collected by a previous compiler on the

basis of different chains of *Isnad*. To this class belongs the *Mustakhraj* of Abu Nu'aym Isfahani on the *Sahihs* of al-Bukhari and of Muslim. In this book Abu Nu'aym has given fresh chains of *Isnad* for some of the traditions which were already included by Bukhari and Muslim in their *Sahihs*, but with different *Isnads*.

11. The *Arba'iniyat*, as the name shows, are collections of forty *Ahadith* relating to one or more subjects which may have appeared to be of special interest to the compiler. An example of this class is the *Arba'in* of al-Nawawi.

Of all these eleven classes of the collections of *Ahadith*, the *Sahifas*, as their description shows, were the earliest in origin. The *Mu'jams*, the *Mustadraks*, the *Mustakrajs* and the *Arba'iniyat* must have been the latest. The *Ajza'* and the *Rasa'il* in their technical sense as described above must also have been later in origin and development than the *Musannaf* and the *Musnad* works. The *Sunan* and the *Jami'* being only subdivisions of the *Musannaf* works, the problem of the priority of origin of the remaining classes of the *Hadith* works rests between the *Musannafs* and the *Musnads*, which is difficult to decide. Goldziher is of the opinion that the *Musnads* are earlier in origin than the *Musannafs* which originated under the influence of the legal system of the Ashab al-Hadith.<sup>85</sup> But as the collection of *Ahadith* was largely due to their legal importance, it is not unlikely that some of the very early collections were arranged according to their subject matter connected with Islamic legal, ritual or religious problems, as is also suggested by the title *Kitab al-Sunam* given to them.

The *Hadith* thus collected by the continuous, hard and honest work of many generations of the Muslims of various countries belonging to different schools of thought, have been a subject of study of Muslim scholars and a source of inspiration to the Muslim world up to the present time. The *Hadith* together with the Qur'an served the Muslims as the main basis of their social structure. From this two-fold basis, the various Islamic sciences originated and developed. To

these two works the average Muslim turns for inspiration and guidance. On them the reconstruction of Islamic thought according to the requirements of modern times can be properly based. The efforts of many modern reformers have so far failed, because they ignored the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, just as some Mediaeval Islamic sects could not flourish, because they had ignored their importance.

### Notes

1. SB, i, 20.
2. SDD, p. 46.
3. TdH, vol. I, p. 6.
4. TDH, i, 7.  
O.P. 146/1
5. ML, v, 454
6. *Mufaddaliyat*. ed. C.J. Lyall. Oxford, 1918-21. 2 vols. LXVI. 5; CXXIII. 16.
7. MSt, vol. II, pp. 11-13.
8. TIS, vol. I, part I, p. 145.
9. *Ibid*, p. 136.
10. *Ibid*, vol. I, part I, p. 136.
11. SB, k. *al-l'tisam*, b. *al-iqtida' b' af'al al-rabi*, vol. p. IV, 166.
12. *Ibid*. k. *al-tahajjud*, b. *salat al-layl*, vol. I, p. 136.
13. *Ibid*.
14. *Ibid*, k. *al-l'tisam*, b. *al-la'ammuq*, vol. iv, p. 166.
15. SM, k, *al-Birr*, b. *tafsir al-Birr*, vol ii, p. 314.
16. SAD, "*Istighfar*", vol. i, p. 119.
17. *Ibid*, "*Takhfif al-Ukhrayayn*", vol. i, p. 124.
18. SB, iv, 62.
19. *Ibid*, k. *al-Wadu'*, b. *Isti'malfadl al-wadu'*, vol. i, pp. 32-33.
20. TIS, vol. viii, p. 73.
21. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 56,
22. SD, p. 45.
23. TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 125.
24. LL, p. 67.
25. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 80
26. SB, k. 'Ilm, b. *al-Tanawub*, vol., i. p. 19.
27. ZDMG, vol. x, p. 2.
28. ZDMG, vol. X, p.2
29. *Mis. 'Ilm*, p. 32.
30. *Ibid*, p. 35
31. SHM, p. 9.
32. *Ibid*.
33. TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 107.
34. *Orient under the Caliphs*, p. 260.
35. *al-Munaydhir*, a Companion, had visited Spain. See NT, vol. i, p. 130.
36. See ch. I in *India's Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature*. By Muhammad Ishaque. University of Dacca, 1955.
37. TIS, vol. iii, part I, p. 206. However, 'Umar spread in various other ways the knowledge of Hadith among Muslims living in various parts of the Caliphate.

38. MSt, vol. 2, p. 34.
39. SUA.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. NT, vol. i, p. 130.
43. TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 134. SB, k. 'Ilm, b. kitabab vol. IMU, p. xxxiii.
44. JBI, part I, p. 76,
45. FM, p. 239.  
O.P. 146/2
46. FB, vol. i, p. 174.
47. 'Asqalani, *op. cit.*
48. MSt., vol. ii, pp. 210-211. TrIs, pp. 18-19.
49. A. Sprenger, "On the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musulmans", JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 103 off., 1856.
50. TdH
51. tDh, Vol. I, P. 95.
52. FN, pp. 225-227.
53. TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 136.
54. FN, *loc. cit.*
55. FN, p. 225.
56. MSt, vol. ii, pp. 213-26.
57. MSt, vol. ii, p. 213.
58. BM, p. 25.
59. viz. Yahya al-Tamimi, Abu Hudhayfa and Suwayd b. Sa'id.
60. SMt, i, 8.
61. TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 164.
62. SB, k. *al-Fihad*, b. *man haddatha b' mashahidihi*, vol. ii, p. 97.
63. JBI, part ii, p. 27.
64. See KZ, vol.i, pp. 174-75.
65. KZ, vol.iv, 254 ff.
66. *Ibid*, ii, 68.
67. *Ibid*, vi, 167. This number is based on my own calculation.
68. MSt, vol. ii, pp. 231-32
69. SHM.
70. MSt, vol. ii, pp. 10-11.
71. RFUH, p. 22.
72. RFUH, pp. 19-20, 22-23.
73. For the difference of opinion about the definition of the *musnad* Hadith see TN, p. 66.
74. A large number of *Musnad* works are mentioned by Haji Khalifah, KZ, vol. v, pp. 532-43.
75. MSt, vol. ii, p. 227.
76. RFUH, p. 21.
77. BM, p. 37.
78. KZ, vol. v, p. 534.
79. MSt, vol. ii, p. 229.
80. TK, vol. i, p. 202.
81. KZ, vol. v, p. 534.  
O.P. 146/3
82. Should they be arranged in the chronological order, the work would be called *Mashikhat*. See OPC. vol. v, part 2, p. 41 fn.
83. BM, pp. 56, 95.
84. MSt, vol. ii, pp. 232ff.



## CHAPTER 2

### ***The Hadith and the Companions* (Sahaba)**

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM SAHABI

The term *al-Sahaba* or *al-Ashab* (singular: *al-Sahabi* and *al-Sahib*, a Companion) is used by the Muslims as a title of great honour for such Muslims as had enjoyed the privilege of having lived in the company of the Prophet. On the qualifications necessary for being a *Sahabi* Muslim scholars differ. Some of them are of the opinion that every Muslim who had seen Muhammad was a *Sahabi*. Some hold that long association with Muhammad is necessary for being a *Sahabi*.<sup>1</sup> The majority of them, however, hold that every grown-up Muslim who associated with Muhammad for some time may be called a *Sahabi*. The near relatives of Muhammad, his bosom friends, his attendants, as well as such ordinary Muslims as saw him even once are generally included among the *Sahaba*.

It is the Companions who reported *Ahadith* from Muhammad. They are the authorities by whom—through the Followers (*al-Tabi'un*),—their students and associates were handed down the Islamic *Ahadith*. Upon their reliability, authenticity and trustworthiness rests to a large extent the credibility of the great mass of *Ahadith* collected by the Muslim scholars of later generations.

#### THE NUMBER OF THE COMPANIONS

The exact number of the Companions cannot be determined. Only once during the early history of Islam was

a census taken, when they were found to be 1,525.<sup>2</sup> This census must have been taken about the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiya, when the danger to the Muslims was great, and an estimate of their actual strength was necessary. From then onwards the number of Muslims went up by leaps and bounds, and before the death of Muhammad, almost the whole of the Arabian peninsula had accepted Islam.

A large number of these Muslims of the time of Muhammad had seen him and listened to his orations and sayings. Forty thousand of them were with him at Mecca<sup>3</sup> when he performed the Farewell Pilgrimage. The number of all those who ever saw or heard him has been estimated by Abu Zara' al-Razi to be above 100,000.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE COMPANIONS WHO RELATED TRADITIONS

Not all of the Companions related the *Hadith* of their master. The *Musnad* of Abu 'Abd al-Rahman, which is said to be the largest collection of *Ahadith*, is stated to contain traditions related by 1300 Companions only.<sup>5</sup> Ibn al-Jauzi, who has given a list of all the Companions who related traditions, has mentioned the names of about 1060 of them, together with the number of the traditions related by each.<sup>6</sup> Five hundred of them are said to have related 1 tradition each. One hundred and thirty two are stated to have handed down 2 traditions each. Eighty are said to have related 3 traditions each. Fifty-two are mentioned as being responsible for 4 traditions each; thirty-two for 5 each; twenty-six for 6 each; twenty-seven for 7 each; eighteen for 8 each, and eleven for 9 each. Sixty of the Companions are credited with having related 10-20 traditions each. Of the rest, each is said to have related 20 or more traditions. Here is the table showing the names of these Companions and the number of the traditions related by them :—

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name of the Companion</i>	<i>Number of Ahadith</i>
1.	Abu Shurayh al-Ka'bi	20
2.	'Abd Allah b. Jarrad	20
3.	Muswir b. Makhrama <sup>7</sup>	20
4.	'Amr b. Umayya al-Damri	20
5.	'Amr b. Umayya (another)	20
6.	Safawan b. 'Assal	20
7.	Sa'd b. 'Ubada	21
8.	al-Rabi'	21
9.	al-Sa'ib	22
10.	Qurra	22
11.	'Umayr b. Rabi'a	22
12.	Umm Qays	24
13.	Laqit b. 'Amir	24
14.	al-Sharid <sup>8</sup>	24
15.	Rifa'a b. Rafi'	24
16.	'Abd Allah b. Unays	24
17.	Aus b. Aus	24
18.	al-Fadl b. 'Abbas	24
19.	Abu Waqid al-Laythi	24
20.	Abu Talha al-Ansari	25
21.	'Abd Allah b. Salam	25
22.	Sahl b. Abi Hathma <sup>9</sup> (Hay thama ?)	25
23.	Abu al-Mulayh al-Hudhali <sup>10</sup>	25
24.	'Abd Allah b. Ja'far	25
25.	Ya'la b. Murra	26
26.	Abu Humayd al-Sa'idi	26
27.	Abu Malik al-Ash'ari <sup>11</sup>	27
28.	'Abd Allah b. Buhayna <sup>12</sup>	27
29.	Abu Usayd al-Sa'idi <sup>13</sup>	28
30.	'Utba b. 'Abd	28
31.	Ya'la b. Umayya	28
32.	'Uthman b. Abi al-'As	29
33.	I,, al-Fadl bint al-Harith	30
34.	Suhayb	30
35.	'Iyad b. Himar (Hammad?)	30
36.	Mu'adh b. Anas	30

No.	Name of the Companion	Number of Ahadith
37.	'Irbad b. Sariya <sup>14</sup>	31
38.	Khubab b. al-Aratt <sup>15</sup>	32
39.	'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr	33
40.	Fatima bint Qays	34
41.	Ma'qil b. Yassar <sup>16</sup>	34
42.	al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muttalib	35
43.	'Amr b. 'Abasa <sup>17</sup>	38
44.	Khuzayama b. Thabit <sup>18</sup>	38
45.	Talha b. 'Abd Allah	38
46.	al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwam <sup>19</sup>	38
47.	'Amr b. al-'As	39
48.	Umm 'Atiya	40
49.	Abu Tha'laba al-Khushani <sup>20</sup>	40
50.	Hakim b. Hizam <sup>21</sup>	40
51.	Sahl b. Hunayf <sup>22</sup>	40
52.	Mu'awiya b. Hayda <sup>23</sup>	42
53.	al-Miqdad	42
54.	'Abd Allah b. Mughfil <sup>24</sup>	53
55.	Junadab b. 'Abd Allah	43
56.	Bilal (the <i>Mu'wadhdhin</i> )	44
57.	Abu Juhayfa	45
58.	Umm Hani	46
59.	Abu Barza <sup>25</sup>	46
60.	Ka'b b. 'Ujra <sup>26</sup>	47
61.	al-Miqdam	47
62.	'Abd Allah b. Zayd	48
63.	Sa'i'id b. Zayd b. 'Amr	48
64.	'Abd allah b. Bishr	50
65.	Shaddad b. Aus	50
66.	Asma' bint Abi Bakr	58
67.	Asma' bint 'Umayy	60
68.	Hafsa, wife of Muhammad	60
69.	Jubayr b. Mut'im	60
70.	Salman al-Farisi	60
71.	'Amr b. 'Auf	62
72.	'Ammar b. Yasir	62

No.	Name of the Companion	Number of Ahadith
73.	'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Auf	65
74.	Umm Habiba, wife of Muhammad	65
75.	'Adi b. Hatim	66
76.	Abu Rafi'	68
77.	Zayd b. Arqam	70
78.	Wa'il b. Hujr <sup>27</sup>	71
79.	Maymuna	76
80.	Salma b. al-Akwa'	77
81.	Rafi' b. Khudayj <sup>28</sup>	78
82.	Zayd b. Khalid	81
83.	Zayd b. Thabit	92
84.	'Abd Allah b. Abi Aufa	95
85.	Jabir b. 'Abd Allah <sup>29</sup>	100
86.	Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari	102
87.	Nu'man b. Bashir	144
88.	Samura b. Junadab <sup>30</sup>	123
89.	Thauban	128
90.	Usama b. Zayd	128
91.	Abu Bakra Nufay' b. al-Harith	132
92.	Mughira b. Shu'ba	136
93.	Abu Bakr (the first Caliph)	142
94.	Jabir b. Samura	146
95.	Uthman (the third Caliph)	142
96.	Aby Ayyub al-Ansari	155
97.	Mu'adh b. Jabal	157
98.	Mu'awiyah (the first Umayyad caliph)	163
99.	Ubayy b. Ka'b	164
100.	Burayda b. al-Hasib. <sup>31</sup>	167
101.	Abu Qatada	170
102.	Abu Darda'	179
103.	'Imran b. Hasin <sup>32</sup>	180
104.	'Ubada b. al-Samit	181
105.	Sahl b. Sa'd	188
106.	Ma'd b. Yaman	225
107.	Abu Umama al-Bahili <sup>33</sup>	250
108.	Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas	271
109.	Abu Dhar al-Ghifari	281

No.	Name of the Companion	Number of Ahadith
110.	al-Bara' b. 'Azib	305
111.	Abu Musa al-Ash'ari	360
112.	Umm Salma, wife of Muhammad	378
113.	'Ali (the fourth Caliph)	536
114.	'Umar (the second Caliph)	537
115.	'Abd Allah b. 'amr b. al-'As	700
116.	'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud	848
117.	'Abd Sa'id al-Khudri	1170
118.	Jabir b. 'Abd Allah	1540
119.	'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas	1660
120.	'A'ishah, wife of Muhammad	2210
121.	Anas b. Malik	
122.	'Abd Allah b. 'Umar b. al-Khattab	2630
123.	Abu Hurayra <sup>34</sup>	55374

It is evident from what has been said that the great mass of the traditions received by us were related by less than three hundred Companions. The *Muwatta* of Imam Malik contains the traditions related by 98 Companions only.<sup>35</sup> The *Musnad* of Abu Da'ud Tayalisi contains those related by 281 of them. The *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal contains those related by about 700 Companions.<sup>36</sup> The two *Sahih*s of al-Bukhari and Muslim contains those related by 208 and 213 Companions respectively, of which 149 are common to the two great works.<sup>37</sup>

Of these 300 Companions referred to above, only 55 have related 100 or more traditions. Of these again, only 11 are responsible for more than 500 traditions each. Six or seven of the latter, each of whom has reported more than 1000 traditions, are known as *al-Mukaththirun*, i.e. the reporters of many traditions.<sup>38</sup>

All these eleven Companions enjoyed the privilege of long association with Muhammad, had a great thirst for his *Hadith* (during his life-time), and could speak with authority about what he had said or done. They lived for a long time

after his death when the mass of traditions which they had learnt was handed down to the succeeding generations of the Muslims, whereas the knowledge gathered by the Companions, who were either killed in the early battles or died shortly after the death of Muhammad, could not spread among the Muslims, and was lost for good. The reporters of the largest number of *Ahadith* include :—

1. Abu Hurayra, 'Abd Allah or 'Abd al-Rahman.<sup>39</sup> He stands at the top of the reporters of *Hadith* among the Companions, and was recognised by Muhammad himself as the Muslim who was most avid for the knowledge of *Hadith*. He belonged to the tribe of Daus, an off-shoot of the great clan of Azd.<sup>40</sup> He came to Madinah in the 7th year of the Hijra, and being told that Muhammad was at Khaybar, went there and accepted Islam. Since then till Muhammad's death, he remained constantly in his company, attending on him and learning his *Hadith* during the day, at the sacrifice of all worldly pursuits and pleasures, and remembering them by heart in the night.<sup>41</sup> After the death of the Prophet, he functioned as a governor of al-Bahrayn for some time during the caliphate of 'Umar, and acted as the governor of Madinah under the early Umayyad caliphs.<sup>42</sup> He died in 59/678.

When Muhammad was no more, and the reports of his sayings and doings were sought in order to settle the increasing daily problems, Abu Hurayra (who instructed more than 800 students in the subject) poured out the profusion of knowledge he had so laboriously accumulated. Sometimes he was taken to task for reporting such traditions as had never been heard of by any of the other Companions. But he retorted that he had learnt what the *Ansar* (Helpers) had missed in attending to their lands and properties, and what the *Muhajirun* (refugees) had failed to learn because of their business engagements, and that he had remembered what they had forgotten under the stress of their multifarious activities.<sup>43</sup> Once when he was taken to task by 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar for relating a particular *Hadith*, he took him to 'A'ishah, who bore witness to the truth of what he had

related.<sup>44</sup> His knowledge and memory were also tested by Marwan who, having written down some traditions related by him, wanted him after a year to relate the same, and found them to be exactly identical with his earlier narration.<sup>45</sup>

He is believed by Muslims to have been too pious and conscientious a Muslim to put into the mouth of Muhammad any word which had not actually fallen from his lips, or to ascribe to him anything that he had not done. But he does not appear to have been endowed by nature with the power of minute observation or a critical faculty strong enough to take cognizance of all the circumstances in which the Prophet uttered certain words or acted in a particular way. Many other Companions, therefore, had to explain some of the *Ahadith* reported by him, and to reject some of them. 'A'ishah, having come to know that Abu Hurayra related that Muhammad had said that a woman was cast into hell-fire because she kept a cat and did not feed it, pointed out to him that the woman was an unbeliever.<sup>46</sup> When she was told that Abu Hurayra related that Muhammad had said that three things were ominous—namely, a house, a horse and a woman—she said that Abu Hurayra came in while the Prophet was saying : "May God destroy the Jews. They say that ill-luck is in three things : in a house, in a woman and in a horse". Abu Hurayra, according to 'A'ishah, heard the last part of the *Hadith*, and missed the first portion of it.<sup>47</sup> 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, having come to know that Abu Hurayra related that Muhammad had said : "*al-wadu' min ma massat ai-nar w'lau min thaur aqit.*" took him to task for relating such a *Hadith*.<sup>48</sup>

Considering the interest of Abu Hurayra in cultural attainments in general, his devotion to the Prophet and to his *Ahadith* in particular, and the test applied by his own contemporaries during his life-time to his memory and his narration, it appears to be very unlikely that he himself fabricated any *Hadith*.<sup>49</sup> But it is possible that at a later period some *Ahadith* may have been attributed to him for the narration of which he was not responsible. The fact that



he narrated a very large number of traditions (larger than any other Companion is said to have narrated) was explained by himself to his own contemporaries. It is therefore clear that the remark that Abu Hurayra was "a pious humbug" is unwarranted.<sup>50</sup>

2. Abu 'Abdal-Rahman 'Abd Allah is the second greatest reporter of *Ahadith*. He was the son of 'Umar, the second caliph. He had accepted Islam simultaneously with his father, and migrated to Madinah with him.<sup>51</sup> He took part in many battles during the life-time of Muhammad and in the wars in Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt, but kept strict neutrality during the civil wars among the Muslims which followed the assassination of 'Uthman. In spite of the great esteem and honour in which he was held by all the Muslims and notwithstanding the suggestion repeatedly made to him to stand for the caliphate (which he obstinately refused to do), he kept himself entirely aloof from party strife, and throughout these years led an unselfish, pious life. He set an example of an ideal citizen just as his father had set an example of the ideal ruler. He died at Mecca in the year 74/692 at the age of 87.

His long association with Muhammad, his blood relationship with Hafsa (wife of Muhammad) and with some other companions of the Prophet, offered him a splendid opportunity to learn *Hadith*, and his long peaceful life gave him the time and leisure to teach and spread *Ahadith* among the Muslims who anxiously sought for them.

He was extremely careful in relating *Ahadith* to others. al-Sha 'bi says that he did not hear a single *Hadith* from him for one whole year.<sup>52</sup> When he related *Ahadith*, his eyes were full of tears.<sup>53</sup> His activities in the service of Islam, his pious life, his straightforward and unselfish career, and his careful and sympathetic treatment of the traditions, put a seal of truth on such of them as were related by him.

3. Abu Hamza Anas b. Malik. At the age of ten years, Anas was presented by his mother, Umm Sulaym, to

Muhammad who had migrated to Madinah. Since then up to the time of Muhammad's death, he had been his favourite attendant.<sup>54</sup> After Muhammad's death, he was appointed by Abu Bakr (at the advice of 'Umar) as a tax-collector at al-Bahrayn. Some time in the later part of his life, he settled down at Basra, where he died in the year 93/711, when he was more than one hundred years old.<sup>55</sup>

During the ten years he spent in the service of Muhammad he had learnt a large number of his *Ahadith*, about which he also learnt a good deal from Abu Bakr, 'Umar and many other Companions of the Prophet.<sup>56</sup> The knowledge of *Hadith* gathered by him was so extensive that his death was considered as a death-blow to half of the entire mass of traditions.<sup>57</sup>

He is accepted by Muslim traditionists as one of the most reliable narrators of *Hadith*. There is no reason to suspect the genuineness of such traditions as may be proved to have been narrated by him.

4. 'A'ishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr and the favourite wife of Muhammad, occupies the fourth place among the reporters of the largest number of *Ahadith*. She enjoyed the constant company of Muhammad as his favourite wife for about eight and a half years.<sup>58</sup> She died in the year 57/676, when she was 65 years old.

She was endowed by nature with a retentive memory and a keen critical faculty. She remembered a large number of pre-Islamic Arabic poems, and was taken during her lifetime as an authority on medicine and on Islamic law.<sup>59</sup> As regards *Ahadith*, she had not only learnt a large number of them in the company of her husband, but also had a critical appreciation of them. She corrected the mistakes of many Companions which they committed in understanding and relating the words of Muhammad. When, for instance, she was told that Ibn 'Umar had quoted Muhammad as having said that the dead are punished in their graves on account of the lamentations of their relatives, she pointed out that

what Muhammad had actually said was that while the dead person was punished in his grave for his own faults and sins, his relatives wept for him. It was, she added, like another instance in which Ibn 'Umar had quoted the Prophet of God as having said of the dead bodies of the unbelievers who were killed in the battle of Badr: "Verily, they hear what I say". What, according to 'A'ishah, the Prophet had in fact said was: "Certainly they know that what I used to say is true." In order to prove her contention, 'A'ishah quoted the verse of the Qur'an which says that one could not make the dead hear, nor could one's voice reach those who were in their graves.<sup>60</sup>

Numerous instances of the criticism of *Ahadith* by 'A'ishah, which show how keen her critical faculty was, have been collected by a distinguished Indian scholar, Saiyid Sulayman Nadwi, in his *Sirat-i-'A'ishah*, perusal of which is sure to be interesting and profitable to those who are interested in her charming personality and in the origin of the Islamic sciences.

It was on account of her extensive knowledge of *Hadith* and Islamic law that even the important Companions sought her advice on legal problems, and a large number of them (and of other Muslims) sought a knowledge of the *Hadith* from her. A long list of those who related *Ahadith* on her authority is given by 'Asqalani in his *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*.<sup>61</sup>

5. Abu al-'Abbas 'Abd allah b. al-'Abbas was born three years before the migration of Muhammad to Madinah,<sup>62</sup> and was 13 years of age at the time of the latter's death. He was loved very much by Muhammad, which is apparent from the *Ahadith* about him (in all the *Hadith* collections). He died in 68/687 at the age of 71.<sup>63</sup>

He seems to have learnt a few *Ahadith* from Muhammad himself. 'Asqalani (quoting Yahya b. al Qattan) refers to the assertion that Ibn 'Abbas related only 10 or so traditions from Muhammad himself, and adds that this estimate is not correct, because in the *Sahih* of al Bukhari and Muslim alone there are more than ten of the traditions reported by Ibn

'Abbas directly from Muhammad.<sup>64</sup> There is, however, no doubt that the number of the *Ahadith* reported by him directly from Muhammad is very small in comparison with the number he learned from other Companions. These *Ahadith* he had learnt from them with great assiduity. He says: "If I expected to learn any *Hadith* from a Companion, I went to his door and waited there—in spite of the wind casting dust on me—till he came out and said : 'Cousin of the Prophet, what brought you here? Why did you not send for me'? I used to reply that it was only proper that I should go to him. Then I learnt the *Hadith* from him".<sup>65</sup>

Ibn 'Abbas was endowed by nature with keen intellectual powers and critical acumen. He was devoted to the study of the *Hadith* and the Qur'an, and was loved on account of his intellectual ability by all the first four caliphs, and was respected by all his contemporaries. He had collected a large number of traditions, written them down in the form of books, and delivered lectures on them to his own disciples. His *Tafsir* of the Qur'an, which was handed down by his student, Mujahid, is well known and has been referred to by later commentators<sup>66</sup>.

Some aspects of his political activity have been criticised severely.<sup>67</sup> But his fame rests on his intellectual attainments, not on his political activity. The reliability of the *Ahadith*, however, which may be proved to have been narrated by him is unquestionable. Of course, much of what has been attributed to him must have been forged by later narrators.

6. Jabir b. 'Abd Allah was one of the early Madinite converts to Islam who attended the second Council of Muhammad with the people of Madinah at Mecca.<sup>68</sup> He took part in 19 battles in the company of Muhammad.<sup>69</sup> He died in Madinah about the year 74/693 at the age of 94.

He learnt the *Hadith* of Muhammad not only from him, but also from many of his important Companions—e.g. Abu Bakr, 'Umar and others. He also learnt them from certain Followers (*al-Tabi'un*), such as Umm Kulthum, the daughter

of Abu Bakr. He used to teach *Hadith* regularly in the mosque at Madinah.<sup>70</sup>

7. Abu Sa'id Sa'd. b. Malik al-Khudri was one of the early Madinite converts to Islam and wanted to take part in the battle of Uhud; but as he was too young, he could not at that time be allowed to take up arms. His father Malik was killed in this battle, and he himself took part in 12 of the battles fought during the life-time of Muhammad. He died at Madinah in 64/683.<sup>71</sup>

He was one of the *Ashab al-suffa*— i.e. a band of poor Companions who worked in the day time for their livelihood, and devoted the night to the reading of the Qur'an and the learning of the *Sunnah* from their teachers. They were known as *al-Qurra'*, and were generally sent out of Madinah in order to instruct people in Islamic rituals, wherever such instruction was needed.

Al-Khudri learnt the *Hadith* from Muhammad as well as from his important Companions, like Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Zayd b. Thabit, etc. He was considered to be the best jurist among the young Companions of Muhammad.<sup>72</sup>

8-11. 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud,<sup>73</sup> 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As, 'Umar b. al-Khattab and 'Ali b. Abi Talib were early converts to Islam. They had suffered for its cause, had enjoyed the company of Muhammad for a long time, and lived after him long enough to transmit the *Hadith* which they had learnt from him. 'Abd Allah b. 'Amar b. al-'As, in spite of being alive during the period of the civil war among the Muslims, kept himself (like 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar b. al-Khattab) above party strife. Of course, he was present at the battle of Siffin between 'Ali and Mu'awiyah on account of the persistence of his father. But he took no active part in it. Even for his presence at the battle he was very regretful in his later life.<sup>74</sup> His interest in *Hadith* was very great. He wrote down all the traditions which he learnt from Muhammad, and collected one thousand of them in a *Sahifa* which he called *al-Sadiqa*.<sup>75</sup> When he lived at Mecca, the

seekers after *Hadith* collected around him in large numbers. But as he lived mostly either in Egypt or at al-Ta'if (and not at Madinah which had been the centre of *Hadith* learning), and since he was more occupied with prayers than with teaching *Hadith*, the later generations of Muslims received fewer traditions from him than from Abu Hurayra, 'A'ishah and others.<sup>76</sup>

Most of the Companions, however, who reported *Ahadith* were very careful in reporting the words of their master, as well as being cautious about accepting them from those who reported them. Abu Bakr, during his caliphate, sought for *Ahadith*, but did not accept the words of those who reported them without a witness.<sup>77</sup> He also asked Muslims not to relate traditions which might cause discord among them.<sup>78</sup> 'Umar, the second caliph, carefully followed the example set by his predecessor. Mughira,<sup>79</sup> Abu Musa,<sup>80</sup> 'Amr b. Umayya<sup>81</sup> and Ubayy b. Ka'b<sup>82</sup> were all compelled by him to produce witnesses for the traditions they had related. He is stated to have imprisoned 'Abd allah b. Mas'ud, Abu Darda' and Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari, because they related too many traditions.<sup>83</sup> Uthman, his successor, in spite of being well-versed in traditions had scruples about relating them.<sup>84</sup> 'Ali, the fourth caliph, did not accept any tradition unless the reporter declared it on oath.<sup>85</sup> 'Abd allah b. Mas'ud had been so cautious in relating traditions that when he related one he perspired and felt uneasy, and at once added that the Prophet of God had either said this or something like it.<sup>86</sup> Zubayr did not like to relate traditions, because he had heard Muhammad say that he who attributed anything to him falsely would make his abode in hell-fire.<sup>87</sup>

Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas feared that people might add to what he related.<sup>88</sup> Abu Darda' after relating a *Hadith* added that, if Muhammad did not say this, he said something like it. This was the practice of Anas b. Malik also. 'Ali used to say that he preferred the heavens coming down upon him to attributing a false *Hadith* to Muhammad.<sup>89</sup>

The fear of committing mistakes in relating the words

of Muhammad had been so great with his companions that many of them did not relate any *Hadith* unnecessarily. 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud related only two or three *Ahadith* in a month.<sup>90</sup> Sa'ib b. Yazid travelled with Sa'd b. Malik from Madinah to Mecca and did not hear him relate a single *Hadith*.<sup>91</sup> Al-Sha'bi lived in the company of 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar for one whole year and never heard him relate a single *Hadith*.<sup>92</sup> Sa'ib b. Yazid reported that he had been in the company of 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Auf, Talha b. 'Ubayd Allah and Sa'd, but had not heard any of them relate a *Hadith*—except for Talha who related the *Hadith* of the battle of Uhud.<sup>93</sup> Suhayb, for his part, was always ready to relate the historical traditions (*maghazi*), but otherwise he did not dare to report the words of Muhammad freely.<sup>94</sup>

#### THE PROBLEM OF THE PROHIBITION

#### AND PERMISSIBILITY OF KITABAT (of *Hadith*)<sup>95</sup>

Some of the Companions, however, who knew the art of writing had written down the *Hadith* during the life-time of Muhammad himself. 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As having secured his permission to write down his *Hadith*, wrote whatever he heard from the Prophet,<sup>96</sup> and collected a thousand of his sayings in *Sahifa*, which he called *al-Sadiqa*.<sup>97</sup> It was seen with him by al-Mujahid, and later on it came into the possession of 'Amr b. Shu'ayb,<sup>98</sup> a great grandson of 'Abd Allah<sup>99</sup>. 'Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad, had in his possession a *Sahifa* which contained certain laws.<sup>100</sup> Another *Sahifa* is reported to have been in the possession of Samura b. Jundab, which according to Goldziher, is identical with his *Risala* to his son, containing many *Ahadith*.<sup>101</sup> Jabir b. 'abd Allah also had a *Sahifa* the contents of which were later on related by Qatada.<sup>102</sup> Sa'd is also reported to have had a book out of which his son related certain practices of Muhammad.<sup>103</sup> Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* has mentioned a *Hadith* which was related from the book of 'Abd Allah b. Abi Aufa.<sup>104</sup> Abu Bakr, the first caliph, is reported to have

collected together 500 *Ahadith*, which he destroyed, because he suspected that he might have accepted some of these *Ahadith* from some unreliable persons.<sup>105</sup> 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas wrote down the *Ahadith* which he learnt from Abu Rafi'<sup>106</sup>. He appears to have collected *Ahadith* in more than one book. Al-Tirmidhi reports in his *Kitab al-'Ilal*, that some people from al-Ta'if brought to Ibn 'Abbas one of his books and read it out to him.<sup>107</sup> It was also reported by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr that when he died, he left behind him so many books that it would have taken a camel to carry all of them away. These books were later used by his son, 'Ali.<sup>108</sup> It is from these books of Ibn 'Abbas that al-Waqidi may have drawn some of his materials, as is shown by a passage quoted in the *Mawahib*.<sup>109</sup> Abu Hurayra also is reported to have written down *Ahadith*, probably at a later stage of his life. These written *Ahadith* he showed to Ibn Wahb<sup>110</sup> and to Umayya al-Damri.<sup>111</sup> The *Sahifa* of Hammam, based on the reports of Abu Hurayra, is well known.<sup>112</sup>

Over and above the reports that we have received with regard to these *Sahifas* and books compiled by the Companions of Muhammad, we have also received many reports of their writing down stray *Ahadith*. According to a report in the *Sunnan* of al Tirmidhi, one of the *Ansar* complained to Muhammad of his weak memory and was advised by him to take the help of his right hand (i.e. writing).<sup>113</sup> Another Companion, al-Rafi' (also called Abu Rafi'), secured Muhammad's permission to write down *Ahadith*.<sup>114</sup> One Abu Shah, hearing Muhammad's oration in the year of the conquest of Mecca, requested him that it be written down for him, and his request was granted.<sup>115</sup> 'Utban b. Malik al-Ansari liked one of the *Hadith* so much that he himself wrote it down.<sup>116</sup>

Some stray *Ahadith* are reported to have been written down by the Companions at their own sweet will. Some of these may not be genuine, and some may prove to be identical with one another.

Muhammad himself had dictated laws with regard to



the poor-tax,<sup>117</sup> prayers and fasts, alms and blood-money, etc.<sup>118</sup> One document containing laws with regard to alms, which had been sent to the officials, was found after his death, attached to his sword, and came into the possession of his successors.<sup>119</sup>

There are, of course, traditions which forbid in general the writing of anything other than the Qur'an and, in particular, of the *Hadith*. Abu Sa'id Sa'd b. Malik al-Khudri, Zayd b. Thabit, the scribe of Muhammad, and Abu Hurayra have related such traditions.<sup>120</sup> Many other Companions and many *Tabi'un* are reported to have disliked and discouraged the writing of *Hadith*. The names of 'Ali, 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Abu Musa, Ibn Sirin, Dahhak, 'Abida, Ibrahim, Ibn an-Mu'tamar, al-Auza'i 'Alqama 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abd Allah, al-'Uyayna, and others have been mentioned in this connection.<sup>121</sup>

As we have already seen, some of these (like 'Ali and Ibn 'Abbas) are also reported to have written down *Hadith* and possessed some *Sahifas* and books. Some of them (like Dahhak, Ibrahim and 'Alqama) are said to have objected to the writing of the *Hadith* in the form of a book, but not to making such notes of them as might serve as a help to the memory. Some (like 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud and Ibn Sirin) are said to have been against the writing of *Hadith* in any form.<sup>122</sup>

The Muslim doctors have tried to explain this apparent contradiction between these *Ahadith* in various ways. Ibn Quatayba, in his *Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadith*, says that either the prohibitive *Ahadith* belonged to an earlier period in the life of Muhammad and are cancelled by the later permissive ones, or the prohibition was meant only for such Companions as were not well trained in the art of writing, and that such of them as could be relied upon to write correctly were allowed to write the *Hadith* also. Al-Nawawi, in his Commentary on the *Sahih* of Muslim, has offered some other explanations. Goldziher holds that the whole controversy with regard to the permissibility of writing down *Ahadith*

arose long after the death of Muhammad.<sup>123</sup>

We know, however, that though the art of writing was introduced into Arabia some time earlier than the birth of Muhammad, and that Arabic prose works were not entirely unknown to the Arabs before him,<sup>124</sup> neither the art of writing nor the Arabic prose works had been popular in the peninsula before the advent of Islam. Before Islam, in the whole of Mecca (the most advanced town in Arabia) only seventeen persons knew how to write.<sup>125</sup> In Madinah, where the influence of the Jews (who are said to be the teachers of the Arabs in this art) had been considerable, the number of the Arabs who could write was less than a dozen, only nine being mentioned by Ibn Sa'd in his *Tabaqat*.<sup>126</sup> He also says that writing was rare in Arabia before Islam, and that it was considered a great distinction among the Arabs to have this skill. Hence such of them as combined a knowledge of the art of writing, with proficiency in swimming and archery were known as *al-kamil*, the perfect.<sup>127</sup> It is also stated that Dhu' al-Rumma, the last Mukhadram poet of Arabia, concealed his knowledge of this art for fear of public opinion being against it.<sup>128</sup> "The Bedouin", says Goldziher, "despises reading and writing even-to-day."<sup>129</sup>

The Prophet did a good deal towards making this art popular among the Arabs. Without his efforts, such Muslims as came under his influence at an early age (e.g. 'Ali, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As and 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas) could not have learnt the art of writing. He asked 'Abd Allah b. Sa'id b. al-'Asl, the Meccan, to teach the art of writing to the people of Madinah.<sup>130</sup> He ordered Shifa', the daughter of 'Abd Allah, to teach this art to Hafsa, one of his wives.<sup>131</sup> He declared after the battle of Badr that each one of those prisoners of war, who were too poor to pay the required ransom and who knew the art of writing could gain liberty by teaching the art of writing to Muslim boys.<sup>132</sup> It was from one of these prisoners of war that Zayd b. Thabit, the trusted scribe of the Qur'an, had learnt this art.<sup>133</sup> And it could not have been without the instigation of Muhammad that 'Ubada

b. al-Samit taught the Qur'an and also the art of writing to some of the *Ashab al-suffa*, one of whom presented him with a bow.<sup>134</sup>

Indirectly also Muhammad played an important part in making the art of writing popular among the Arabs—viz. by establishing among them a state which necessitated the writing of treaties with the various tribes, letters to the various chiefs, orders to the state officials, and laws for conducting the affairs of the state. His immediate successors made the knowledge of writing compulsory in the schools established by them.

Muhammad, therefore, cannot be said to have had an 'aversion to the scribes' (Sprenger). His sayings prohibiting the writing of *Hadith* in particular, or of anything other than the Qur'an in general, which are weaker and fewer than the permissive *Ahadith*, must have been based either on the generally unfavourable public opinion prevailing in Arabia at the beginning of his life as a prophet, or on the possibility of confusion arising over the Qur'an, about the purity of which he was so scrupulous. As soon as he found that these dangers were over, he permitted *Hadith* and things other than the Qur'an to be written. The date of one of the *Ahadith* in the *Sahih al-Bukhari*—i.e. the permission to write an oration for Abu Shah in the year of the conquest of Mecca—supports the view that the permissive *Ahadith* are later in date than the prohibitive ones, and therefore cancel them. The dictation of certain laws already referred to supports this theory. It is reported that Umar I had thought at one point of collecting *Ahadith*. Muhammad's prohibitive sayings could not have been in force at that time, otherwise all of the Companions would not have voiced their approval, and Umar himself would not have gone on contemplating this undertaking for a whole month before ultimately deciding against it. And then the reason he gave for his decision was his fear of neglect of the Qur'an and not — had the prohibitive sayings been in force — his unwillingness to go against the Prophet.

Such European orientalisks as have made a critical study

of the subject also hold that some *Ahadith* were written down during the actual life-time of the Prophet. Dr. A. Sprenger, who rightly claims to have been the first to submit the sources of the life of Muhammad to a critical enquiry, says :—

"It is generally believed that the traditions were preserved during the first century of the Hijra solely by memory. European scholars under the erroneous impression that *haddathana*, ('I have been informed by') is the term by which the traditions are usually introduced, are of the opinion that none of the traditions contained in the collection of al-Bukhari had been written down before him." "This, he continues, "appears to be an error. Ibn `Amr and other Companions of Muhammad committed his sayings to writing, and their example was followed by many of the *Tabi`un*".<sup>135</sup>

The same laborious and learned orientalist (in his instructive article on "The Origin and progress of writing down historical facts"),<sup>136</sup> while discussing the pros and cons of the problem, says :

"There were nevertheless some men, even among the theologians and traditionists, who from the earliest time wrote down the information which they wished to preserve. The most important among these are `Abd Allah b. Amr, Anas b. Malik and Ibn al-`Abbas, who were Companions of the Prophet and preserved more records of him than any one else. The *Ahadith* related by `Abd Allah and Ibn al-`Abbas were preserved by their families in writing."

Ignaz Goldziher says : "The choice of the word *Main* for the text of *Hadith* as opposed to *Isnad* (chain of authorities) can also serve as a proof of the falsity of the assumption that, according to the opinion of the Muslims, originally the writing of the *Hadith* was prohibited, and that they had been passed on by oral tradition only. It may be assumed that the writing of the *Hadith* was a very old method of their preservation. The aversion to writing them is the result of ideas which came into being in later times. Such of them (the *Ahadith*) as are said to have already been

preserved in writing in the first century may be thought to constitute the oldest ingredient of the *Hadith* materials. There is nothing against the assumption that the Companions and their students wanted to guard the sayings and the decrees of Muhammad against forgetfulness by writing them down. How, then, in a society in which the wise sayings of ordinary men were preserved in writing, could the preservation of the sayings of the Prophet have been left to the vagaries of oral tradition! Many a Companions carried their *Sahifas* with them, and from them they conveyed their teachings and culture to their students. The contents of these *Sahifas* were called *Main al-Hadith*."<sup>137</sup> Another passage in the same book reads : "Such reports show that the *Ashab al-Hadith* do not reject the theory that the sayings of the Prophet were written down in the earliest times. In fact, we have been able to observe a series of statements on the existence of Tradition-*Sahifas* by some of the Companions".<sup>138</sup> The conclusion arrived at by Goldziher in these passages is incontrovertible. But his theory that the whole controversy about the permissibility of the writing down of *Ahadith* arose long after the death of Muhammad is unwarranted and indefensible. It is based on his assumption that the controversy arose as a result of certain ideas which came into being at a later time. But such 'ideas' have not been defined by him.

### Notes

1. TA, p. 18; FM, pp. 367-73; MIS, pp. 118-19.
2. ATb, vol. i, p. 1530; SB, k, *al-Jihad*, b. *kitab al-Imam*, vol. ii, p. 123.
3. MIS, p. 121.
4. ITS, vol. i, p. 3.
5. KZ, vol. v, p. 534.
6. TFA, pp. 184-197.
7. IMA, vol. i, No. 1109.
8. TT, vol. iv, No. 573.
9. *Ibid*, No. 425.
10. *Ibid*, vol. xii, No. 1124.
11. IMA, vol. ii,
12. TT, vol. v, No. 653.
13. IMA, vol. ii, No. 2806.
14. TT, vol. vii, No. 340.
15. *Ibid*, vol. iii, No. 254.

16. IMA, vol. i, No. 1095.
17. *Ibid*, vol. ii, No. 1896.
18. TT, vol. iii, No. 267.
19. *Ibid*, No. 592.
20. IMA, vol. ii, No. 2850.
21. TT, vol. ii, No. 775.
22. *Ibid*, vol. iv, No. 428.
23. IMA, vol. i, No. 1081.
24. TT, vol. vi, No. 74.
25. IMA, vol. i, No. 1081.
26. TT, vol. vi, No. 74.
27. IMA, vol. ii, No. 2844.
28. TT, vol. viii, No. 788.
29. TT, vol. ii, No. 115.
30. IMA, vol. ii, No. 2434.
31. TT, vol. i, No. 797.
32. *Ibid*, vol. viii, No. 219.
33. IMA, vol. ii, No. 2799.
34. TFA, pp. 184-86.
35. SMT, i, 8f.
36. TK, i, 202.
37. TFA, pp. 197-205.
38. FM, p. 379; TA, p. 352.
39. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, pp. 54ff.
40. GT, No. 10.
41. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 54.
42. *Ibid*, p. 60.
43. *Ibid*, p. 56.
44. *Ibid*, p. 58.
45. SHM, pp. 38-39.
46. MAT, No. 1400.
47. MAT, No. 1537.
48. 'Ablution (necessitated by) contact with fire even though it should be a piece of cheese.' JT, i, p. 12.
49. SHM, pp. 36-40.
50. LL, iii, pp. LXXXIII-LXXXV.
51. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, pp. 105-137.
52. TIS, vol. iv, part 1, pp. 106-25.
53. TIS, vol. iv, part 1, p. 124.
54. TdH, vol. i, p. 38.
55. TA, p. 166.
56. TdH, vol. i, p. 38.
57. TA, p. 167.
58. TdH, vol. i, p. 24.
59. TdH, vol. i, p. 24.
60. SB, k. *Maghazi*, "Badr", vol. iii, p. 5.
61. Vol. xii, No. 2841.
62. UGh, vol. iii, p. 193.
63. *Ibid*, p. 195.
64. TT, vol. v, No. 474.
65. TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 121.  
Cf. JBI, i, pp. 85-86.
66. Elsn. "'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas", I. Veccia Vaglieri.
67. Els. "'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas", F. Buhl.

68. TdH, vol. i, p. 37.
69. TA, p. 185.
70. TT, vol. ii, No. 67
71. TA, p. 723.
72. TT, vol. iii, No. 894.
73. See "Ibn Mas'ud" in Els.
74. UGh, vol. iii, pp. 233-35.
75. *Ibid.*
76. FM, p. 379.
77. SAD, k, *al-Fara'id*, b. *al-Jaddah*, vol. ii, p. 45.
78. TdH, vol. i, p. 3.
79. SAD, "Diyat al-Janin", vol. ii, p. 280.
80. SB, vol. iv, p. 58.
81. MAT, No. 1364.
82. TIS, vol. iv, part 1, pp. 13-14.
83. TdH, vol. i, p. 7.
84. TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 39
85. SAD, vol. i, p. 220.
86. TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 39.
87. TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 110.
88. (1) & (2) TIS, vol. iii, pt. 1, p. 102.
89. JBl, part 1, pp. 78-79.
90. SD, p. 46.
91. *Ibid.*
92. SIM, p. 4.
93. TIS, vol. iii, part 1, p. 161; SB, vol. ii, 97.
94. A detailed consideration of both these aspects of the problem, and copious data on them, will be found in SD, JBl, pp. 63-77, TI, and SHM (intro.). The contents of TI have been summarized by A. Sprenger in one of his articles (see JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 312-18, etc.
95. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 9.
96. UGh, vol. iii, pp. 233-35
97. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 8
98. TT, vol. viii, No. 80.
99. SB, k, 'Ilm, b. *kitab al-'ilm*, vol. i, p. 21 *et al*
100. JT, "al-Yamin ma' al-Shahid", vol. i, p. 160.
101. MSt., vol. ii, p. 10.
102. *Ibid.*
103. *Ibid.*
104. TdH, vol. i, p. 5.
105. TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 123.
106. JT, p. 238.
107. TIS, vol. v, p. 216.
108. ML.
109. FB, vol. i, p. 148.
110. JBl, part 1, p. 74.
111. See SHM.
112. JT, vol. ii, p. 91.
113. JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 312-18.
114. SB, k, 'Ilm, b. *kitab al-'ilm*; FB, p. 148.
115. JASB, vol. xxv, p. 319.
116. SDq, pp. 204, 209, 485.
117. TIS, vol. i, part 2, p. 19.
118. SAD, *Zakat al-Sa'imah*, vol. i, p. 226.

119. MAH, ii, 403; iii, 13; v, 183; SD, pp. 64ff.; SM, k, Zuhd, b. hukm, kitabab, vol. ii, p. 414.
120. JBI, vol. i, pp. 63-68; JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 303ff.
121. SD, *loc. cit.* JASB, *loc. cit.*
122. MSt, vol. ii, pp. 1996-97. JASB, vol. xxv, pp. 375ff.
123. *Ibid.* pp. 204-205;
124. FB, pp. 471f.
125. These are : Abu 'Abs; Ubayy b. Ka 'b; 'Abd allah b. Rawaha; Aus b. Khaul; Mundhir b. 'Amr; Usayd and his father, al-Hudayr; Sa 'd b. 'Ubada; Rafi 'b. Malik
126. TIS, iii, 2, p. 91.
127. KAg, vol. xvi, p. 121.
128. MSt, vol.i, p. 112.
129. UGh, "'Abd Allah b. Sa 'id b. al-'Asi".
130. JBn, p. 472.
131. TIS, ii, 2, p. 14.
132. TIS, ii 2, p. 14
133. MAH, v, p. 315.
134. JASB, vol. xxv, p. 303.
135. JASB, *loc. cit.*
136. MSt. vol. ii, pp. 8-9.
137. MSt, ii. 195.



## CHAPTER 3

### *Hadith After the Death of the Companions*

*"May God bless him who heard from us a saying, and preserved it (in his memory) so that he might carry it to others; for verily, many a person carries knowledge to a man more learned than himself, and many of those who carried knowledge have not assimilated it themselves."*

*(al-Tirmidhi)<sup>1</sup>*

#### THE FOLLOWERS (*al-Tabi'un*)

Many a time Muhammad expressed a desire that his *Hadith* should be well cultivated and widely spread. His wish, as we have seen, was carried out by his faithful and devoted Companions.

After the death of Muhammad and the establishment of the vast Islamic empire, the Companions settled down in different towns in the various provinces. In these towns they were surrounded by a large number of such Muslims, who had not seen Muhammad, and were eager to hear the reports of his words and deeds from the lips of those who had lived and associated with him. Abu Darda' at Damascus, Abu Idris at Emesa, Hudhayfa at Kufa, Anas at Basra, Jabir b. 'Abd Allah and 'A'ishah and others at Madinah, and other Companions at other important towns, *had round about them large circles of eager disciples who not only learnt from them the Hadith of their master, but also acquired from them a keenness for seeking out Traditions and for their careful cultivation and preservation.*

Abu Darda,' had such a large crowd of disciples round about him as are found in the retinues of kings.<sup>2</sup> Mu'adh b. Jabal together with 32 other Companions related *Hadith* to their disciples at Emesa.<sup>3</sup> Hudhayfa delivered lectures on *Hadith* to a band of eager disciples in a mosque at Kufa.<sup>4</sup> Ubayy b. Ka'b was one of the many Companions who taught *Hadith* to their students in the mosque at Madinah.<sup>5</sup>

The early Muslims appear to have been extremely eager to hear the reports of Muhammad's *Hadith* from the lips of his Companions. It is related that such a large crowd of them collected round a Companion when he related *Hadith*, that he was compelled to get on to the roof of a house in order to continue his address.<sup>6</sup> Abu Hanifa, the founder of the Hanafite school of Muhammadan Law, reports that when he went to Mecca with his father in order to perform the pilgrimage, he saw there a large crowd listening with great attention to a Companion who related to them the *Ahadith* of Muhammad.<sup>7</sup>

These eager disciples of the Companions were known among the traditionists by the honourable title of *al-Tabi'un*, i.e. the Followers. They were divided into several classes according to the order of the Companions from whom they learnt the reported traditions. Al-Hakim classified them into 15 classes of which he explicitly mentioned only 4.<sup>8</sup> Ibn Sa'd in his *Tabaqat* classified them into nine classes. But the majority of the later writers on *Asma' al-Rijal* classified them into three classes only :—

1. the disciples of such Companions as accepted Islam before the conquest of Mecca.
2. the disciples of such Companions as embraced Islam after the conquest of Mecca; and
3. the disciples of such Companions as were not fully grown up at the time of Muhammad's death.

Of the *Tabi'un*, the earliest to die was said to be Zayd b. Ma'mar b. Zayd who was killed in one of the Persian wars in the 30th year of the Islamic era. The one who was the

last to die was said to be Khalf b. Khalifa who died in 180 A.H.<sup>9</sup> The *Tabi'un*, therefore, may be said to have preserved and propagated *Hadith* for more than a century—at first in association with the Companions; and when the latter had passed away, with the help of their own disciples. The disciples of the *Tabi'un* are called *Atba' al-Tabi'in* (the followers of the followers). Some of these *Atba* lived till about the end of the first quarter of the third century A.H.,<sup>10</sup> before the end of which were compiled almost all the important works in *Hadith* literature. The *Tabi'un*, taken as authorities on *Hadith* after the death of the Companions, transmitted their knowledge to their own disciples, who in turn passed it on to the next generation.

#### THE TRADITIONISTS' DEVOTION TO HADITH

All these various generations of the Traditionists displayed marvellous activity in the pursuit of *Hadith*. Their love for the subject was profound. Their enthusiasm for it knew no bounds. Their capacity to suffer for the sake of it had no limit. The rich among them sacrificed riches at its altar; and the poor among them devoted their lives to it in spite of their poverty.

We have already seen how devotedly the Companions had served the cause of *Hadith*. In their zeal for their propagation, they had gone so far as was likely to cause the neglect of the Qur'an itself, and 'Umar I had to put a stop to this.<sup>11</sup> After the death of the Companions, however, the Followers and their disciples propagated *Hadith* with unabated vigour. Al-Zuhri (d. 124/741) spent money like water for the sake of it.<sup>12</sup> He had been so busy with works on *Hadith* that his wife preferred his having three more wives to his love for books.<sup>13</sup> Rabi'a (d. 136/753) in his search for *Hadith* spent all he possessed, and in the end had to sell the beams of the roof of his house, and lived on the rotten dates which were thrown away by the people of Madinah.<sup>14</sup> Ibn al-Mubarak spent 40,000 coins in search of *Hadith*.<sup>15</sup> Yahya

b. Ma'in (d. 233/847) spent on *Hadith* 150,000 silver coins which he had inherited from his father, and in the end he did not possess even a pair of shoes to put on.<sup>16</sup> 'Ali b. 'Asim spent 100,000 silver coins;<sup>17</sup> al-Dhahabi spent 150,000 coins;<sup>18</sup> Ibn Rustam, 300,000;<sup>19</sup> and Hisham b. 'Ubayd Allah (d. 221/835), 700,000 silver coins<sup>20</sup> in search of *Hadith*. Khatib Baghdadi gave away 200 gold coins to those who devoted their lives to *Hadith*.<sup>21</sup> Many other instances of this type can easily be gathered from the books on *Asma' al-Rijal*.

Such of the Traditionists, however, as were not born with silver spoons in their mouths did not give up their study of the subject in despair. On the contrary, they carried on their pursuit of it with inexhaustible energy and remarkable assiduity. Ibn Abi Dhi'b (d. 159/775) in his thirst for knowledge had to fast for days and nights continuously on account of his poverty.<sup>22</sup> Abu Hatim al-Razi, in spite of his poverty, stayed at Basra for fourteen years in order to learn *Hadith*. During this period he once had to sell even his clothes in order to earn his livelihood.<sup>23</sup> Al-Shafi'i, the founder of one of the schools of Islamic law, wrote the *Hadith* which he had learnt, on pieces of bones (which he kept in a bag), because in his student life he was too poor to buy paper.<sup>24</sup> Al-Bukhari, the famous traditionist, lived on grass and herbs for three days during his travels in search for *Hadith*.<sup>25</sup> As a matter of fact, it seems that most of the Traditionists were poor, many important authorities on *Hadith* holding that poverty and readiness to suffer are indispensable for knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

The number of the seekers of *Hadith* who flourished during the various periods of their history were legion. Among the Companions Abu Hurayra alone is said to have related traditions to more than 800 students. At Kufa alone, when Ibn Sirin visited that town, there were 4000 students of *Hadith* living there.<sup>27</sup> At Madinah 300 students of *Hadith* associated with Abu Zinad (d. 132 A.H.) alone;<sup>28</sup> and later on, the door of Malik b. Anas became a rendezvous for a crowd of them who sometimes even quarrelled among

themselves for a seat near the Imam at his lectures.<sup>29</sup> The discourses of 'Ali b. 'Asim on *Hadith* were attended by more than 30,000 students;<sup>30</sup> those of Sulayman b. Harb by 40,000;<sup>31</sup> those of 'Asim b. 'Ali, by 120,000;<sup>32</sup> those of Yazid b. Harun, by 70,000;<sup>33</sup> and those of Abu Muslim Kajji,<sup>34</sup> by an immense number of students of whom only those who used ink-pots for taking down notes were found to exceed 40,000.<sup>35</sup>

The attendance of such an incredibly large number of students at lectures on *Hadith* may be explained in the light of some of the methods of teaching *Hadith*, which will be described later. The best of these methods, which is called *Sama'* (hearing), includes *Imla'* (dictation). It consisted in the recitation of *Hadith* by the teacher to his students. In order to do this, the teacher had to purify his mind of all worldly thoughts, dress cleanly and properly, and appoint some scholars well versed in *Hadith* to keep order among the students and to reproduce his recitations to such students as might be unable to follow the lecture because of sitting at a distance from him. The lecturer had to stand up at an elevated place, and recite every word of each tradition distinctly, loudly and slowly so that the students would be able to write everything down. The various reproducers had to repeat exactly, distinctly, slowly and loudly the words of the lecturer to the students round about each one of them. Their number had to be in accordance with the number of the students attending the lectures. In the case of the lectures delivered by Abu Muslim al Kajji at Baghdad, there were seven reproducers appointed by him. At the end of the lecture, the place occupied by the students who attended the lecture was measured, the ink-pots used by them and left by them in the field were counted, and, after careful calculation, the number of the students who wrote down the *Hadith* was fixed at 40,000.<sup>36</sup>

The number of such Traditionists as had attained mastery of the subject and were taken as authorities on it was also quite large. At Madinah alone, when Imam Malik went there

to study *Hadith*, there lived 70 such Traditionists as had associated with the Companions and had learnt *Hadith* from them and from the Followers.<sup>37</sup> In Baghdad alone there lived 800 *shuyukh* at the end of the second century A.H.

### FORGERY IN HADITH AND ITS CAUSES

These and a large number of similar instances, which may easily be gathered from the works on *Asma' al-Rijal*, show how large a number of Muslims pursued the study of *Hadith* in every period of the history of Islam. But all of them could not be equally competent to take up this great task, nor could they be equally serious and careful in pursuing it. During the period following the death of Muhammad, many Companions (as we have already seen) were censured by their friends for their carelessness about and want of insight into what they related of the Prophet.<sup>38</sup> Among the Followers and their Successors, with the rise of the various parties and sects in Islam, the number of careless and insincere students and teachers of *Hadith* greatly increased. Some of them were careless in the choice of their own teachers; some of them made *bona fide* mistakes in relating to their students what they had learnt for themselves; and some of them made willful changes in the text or in the *Isnad* of some *Hadith*, and forged others for the sake of personal profit or party gain, or even with the pious intention of calling people to the Path of God and to the dictates of Religion.

Thus a large number of forged traditions originated and gained currency among the Muslims. These may be traced to one of the following four classes of forgers :—

1. The Heretics and enemies of Islam who wanted to destroy the simplicity and purity of the faith.
2. Party leaders, sectarian preachers and seekers of favours from the ruling chiefs.
3. The Story-tellers (*al-Qussas*).

4. The so-called pious Traditionists, who either committed *bona fide* mistakes, or held it permissible to forge traditions for religious and pious purposes.

1. The Heretics (*al-Zanadiqa*) who flourished under various guises during the various periods of the history of Islam, caused havoc in the *Hadith* by their willful forgery of thousands of traditions, and by propagating them among the Muslims. "The *Zanadiqa*", says Hammad b. Zayd, "have concocted 14,000 traditions in the name of the Prophet of Islam."<sup>39</sup> To name only a few of them, I may mention `Abd al-Karim b. Abi al-`Auja, Bayyan b. Sam`an and Muhammad b. Sa`id, all of whom were put to the sword for their heresies, and the first of whom alone had forged 4000 traditions in the name of the Prophet of Islam.<sup>40</sup> Another heretic, who was killed by the order of Harun al-Rashid, is said to have confessed to forging 1000 *Ahadith*.<sup>41</sup>

2. The Heretics, however, could not do much damage to the Traditions of Islam. It being well known that they were anti-Islamic, their statements could not be accepted by the Muslim world. The real danger to *Hadith* stemmed from the Muslim friends themselves. The various party leaders, the numerous sectarian preachers, and the seekers of favours from the caliphs and their chiefs, proved more dangerous to the genuineness and purity of *Ahadith* than the declared Heretics. These Muslims, with their avowed profession of the faith of Islam, could not be expected to put into the mouth of their own Prophet what they themselves had forged. But immediate personal gain, or even the vain hope of it, has often proved to be a greater force than truth and righteousness, and the love of party and sect has often been more powerful than that of high principles. Some of the party leaders and sectarian chiefs in the history of Islam also failed to rise above personal and party considerations. They did not hesitate to ascribe to their Prophet a saying that might serve their immediate object. Al-Muhallab (d. 83/702), the great adversary of the Khawarij, confessed that he had forged traditions against them.<sup>42</sup> `Awana b. al-Hakam (d. 158/774)

and others, who belonged to the Umayyad party, concocted traditions in their own favour.<sup>43</sup> Abu al-'Ayna Muhammad b. al-Qasim forged *Ahadith* in favour of the 'Alid party.<sup>44</sup> Muhammad b. al-Qasim al-Talqani (d. 310/922), an important member of the *Murjia* sect, forged such *Ahadith* as supported the doctrines of his sect.<sup>45</sup> Ghiyath b. Ibrahim, a courtier of al-Mahdi, made such intentional changes in a *Hadith* as might please the caliph.<sup>46</sup> Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 150/767) expressed to the same caliph his readiness to concoct for him some traditions edifying 'Abbas, an ancestor of the caliph.<sup>47</sup> Muhammad b. al-Husayn al-Sulami forged *Ahadith* in favour of the *Sufis*.<sup>48</sup> Muhammad b. al-Hasan concocted traditions edifying 'A'ishah and in favour of the *Sunni*.<sup>49</sup> As a matter of fact, most of the traditions edifying certain individuals or tribes, or a particular province or district or town, or glorifying a sect or a sectarian leader, (many of which are cited by Goldziher),<sup>50</sup> owe their origin to some of these deliberate forgers, and have been declared by eminent authorities on *Hadith* to be mere concoctions.<sup>51</sup>

3. The *Qussas* (the story-tellers). Though much humbler in position than the leaders of parties or sects, they were no less dangerous than the latter to the traditions of Islam. Their main business at first was to relate moral stories after the morning and evening prayers in order to exhort the people to do good deeds. Their origin may be traced back to the time of 'Umar b. al-Khattab, who is said to have permitted for the first time al-Tamin al-Dari (whom al-Damiri<sup>52</sup> considers to have been the first story-teller in Islam) or 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr (whom Ibn Sa'd<sup>53</sup> considers to have been the first story-teller) to relate moral stories. Mu'awiyah,<sup>54</sup> the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, gave them the title of 'the common story-tellers' —i.e. as opposed to 'the special story-tellers' who were appointed by Mu'awiyah himself in order to counteract the propaganda of his opponents against him.<sup>55</sup>

These story-tellers, among whom may be included the common street preachers who held no official position, had



to deal with the credulous common people, who appreciated amusing stories and fables more than hard facts, dry laws, and genuine traditions. They soon grew in number, spread across Mesopotamia and Central Asia, and adapted themselves to their audiences, who were attracted more by their amusing stories than by the learned discourses of the scholars. At an early period in the history of Islam,<sup>56</sup> they became degraded to the level of fable-mongers, whose main objective was to please the public and to squeeze gold and silver coins out of their pockets. To this end, they invented thousands of such amusing fables as might appeal to the common herd of people, attributed them to the Prophet, and related them to their audiences. One of them related to his audience on the authority of Ahmad b. Hanbal and Yahya b. Ma'in that when one said "There is no god but God" (*La Ilahaila Allah*), there was created by God for each letter (or word) uttered by him a bird with a beak made of gold and feathers made of pearls. Then this story-teller related a long story in continuation of the forged tradition. At the end of his sermon, he was told by Ahmad and Yahya, who were present on the occasion, that they had never related any such tradition to him. The story-teller tried to silence his critics by making fun of them.<sup>57</sup> Another *Qass* related to an audience in a mosque numerous traditions on the authority of Harim b. Hayyan (d. 46 A.H.); and when he was challenged by the latter, he said that he was not the only Harim in the world. "As a matter of fact," said the undaunted story-teller, "fifteen persons by the name of Harim are present in this very mosque".<sup>58</sup> Kulthum b. 'Amr al-'Attabi once collected a crowd around himself in a mosque, and related to them with complete *Isnad a Hadith* saying that he who touched the tip of his nose with his tongue might rest assured that he would never be sent to Hell. The audience showed their readiness to accept this forgery as a genuine tradition—by trying to ascertain their fate through their success in experimenting with what they had heard.<sup>59</sup>

The selfishness of the *Qussas* was so great that they not

only did not feel ashamed of forging traditions in the name of the Prophet for their own personal gain, but they could have no love either for one another. A proverb says : 'One story-teller does not love another.'<sup>60</sup> But sometimes, in order to do mischief to the people and to gain their own ends, two story-tellers would work together to forge traditions. Thus, one of them stood up at one end of a street narrating traditions on the merits of 'Ali, while the other stood up at the other end of it—relating to his audience traditions exalting Abu Bakr. They gained money from the Shi'ah as well as from the Nasibis in this way, and later on divided it equally among themselves.<sup>61</sup>

Their activities were so dangerous to the traditions of Islam as well as to the State itself, that Malik b. Anas did not allow them to step into the mosque at Madinah.<sup>62</sup> Various Traditionists censured many of them, and in the year 279 their activities were put to a stop in Baghdad.<sup>63</sup>

4. The most dangerous class of the forgers of traditions consisted of the so-called pious Traditionists themselves. Their love for the traditions of Islam could not be doubted. Their sincerity of purpose could not be denied. But it is rightly said (by an eminent English writer) : 'Everyone kills the object of his love'. Many of the pious Traditionists — unknowingly, of course—set about killing the science of Traditions by forging thousands of traditions, by ascribing them to Muhammad, and giving them currency among the Muslims.

Nuh b. Abi Maryam, who had studied theological sciences with theologians of great reputation, was known as *al-Jami'* (the man of comprehensive scholarship) on account of his vast and varied learning. He acted as a judge at Merv during the reign of al-Mansur, the second Abbasid caliph. He related traditions describing the virtues of the various chapters of the Qur'an. But when he was pressed for the authorities from whom he had received these traditions, he confessed that he had forged them for the sake of God and in order to attract people to His Book.<sup>64</sup> Aban b. Abi 'Ayyash, who was one of the most godly persons of his time, was

severely censured by Shu'ba b. al-Hajjaj, on account of more than 1500 traditions related by him on the authority of Anas having been declared to have no foundation.<sup>65</sup> Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Bahili (d. 275/888) was counted as one of the most pious persons of his time; but Abu Da'ud having looked into 400 traditions which were related by him, found that all of them were forgeries. Ahmad himself confessed to having forged traditions in order to make the hearts of the people tender and soft<sup>66</sup> (*tarqiq al—qulub*). Sulayman b. 'Amr al-Nakha'i, generally known by his surname Abu Da'ud, was a contemporary of Ahmad b. Hambal, and he fasted in the day and offered prayers in the night more than any of his contemporaries. But he is characterized by the critics as a liar and forger of traditions.<sup>67</sup> Wahb b. Hafs was generally recognised as a virtuous Muslim. His asceticism was so acute that, for twenty years, he did not talk to anyone. But he did not hesitate to forge traditions.<sup>68</sup> These and many other well-intentioned and outwardly pious Muslims—like Maysara b. 'Abd Rabbihi<sup>69</sup> the Persian; Ahmad b. Harb (d. 234/848), the man of Piety;<sup>70</sup> 'Ubad b. Kuthayr<sup>71</sup> (d. 150/767); 'Abd Allah b. Ayyub<sup>72</sup> Hushaym b. Bashir<sup>73</sup> (104-183/722-799; Ziyad b. 'Abd Allah;<sup>74</sup> and the followers of Muhammad b. Kiram al-Sijistani<sup>75</sup> held that it was permissible to forge traditions in order to attract people to good deeds and to warn them against wrongdoing. They forged hundreds of traditions and concocted thousands of *Isnads*, considering their forgeries to be religious and pious, and hoped for a reward from God for them.

These impious heretics, and various worldly and godly Muslims (i.e. the foes as well as the friends of Islam), forged thousands of traditions, and gave currency to them all over the Muslim world. Muhammad b. 'Ukkasha and Muhammad b. Tamim forged more than 10,000 traditions.<sup>76</sup> Abu Sa'id b. Ja'far forged more than 300 traditions in the name of Abu Hanifa alone.<sup>77</sup> Ahmad al-Qaysi<sup>78</sup> concocted more than 3000 traditions. Ahmad al-Marwazi<sup>79</sup> forged more than 10,000 traditions. Hasan al-Basri<sup>80</sup> forged more than 1000 traditions.

'Abd al-'Aziz b. Sulayman forged about 200 traditions. Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah al-Jubari<sup>81</sup> forged many thousand traditions. 'Abd al-Rahim<sup>82</sup> forged more than 500 traditions. Further more, a large number of other forgers—like Ziyad b. Maymun,<sup>83</sup> Shurayk b.<sup>84</sup> 'Abd Allah, Talha b. 'Amr,<sup>85</sup> etc.—concocted thousands of false *Ahadith*, some of which are quoted in sermons and recited from pulpits even to-day.

### THE HONEST AND CRITICAL TRADITIONISTS

But there lived in every period in the history of *'Ilmal-Hadith* numerous truth-loving, God-fearing, honest and scrupulous Traditionists who neither cared for personalities and parties, nor feared power and public opinion. Their sole object in life was to learn the true traditions of their prophet, to preserve their purity and genuineness, and to propagate them among the Muslims. They pursued these ends neither as a pastime nor as a matter of pleasure. Neither did they do these things for the sake of pecuniary gain or public fame, nor in order to influence people and their thought. They did them for their own sake. To them, 'knowledge' was the end, not a means. With them, as Sufyan al-Thauri says, the pursuit of *Hadith* had become like a disease which they could not help.<sup>86</sup>

During the early period of the history of Islam, when the Companions who had associated with Muhammad were still living, many of them (as we have already seen)<sup>87</sup> were extremely scrupulous in relating the traditions, as well as in accepting those related by their friends. Among the Followers (*al-Tabi 'un*), a large number of whom flourished during the second half of the first and the first half of the second century of the Islamic era,—Ibn Abi Layla (20-83), Qasim b. Muhammad, Raja', b Hayawa (d. 112/730), Muhammad b. Sirin (35-115/655-728, Abu Zinad (d. 132/749), Yahya b. Sa'id (d. 143/760), and many others were extremely honest and strict with regard to the authorities from whom they received the traditions of their Prophet.

Ibn Abi Layla used to say that no one could be credited with a knowledge of *Hadith* unless he was able to reject some of them and accept others.<sup>88</sup> Qasim and Raja' and Ibn Sirin were scrupulously honest about each word of the *Ahadith* which they related.<sup>89</sup> Ibn Sirin declared that *Hadith* were religion, and warned people to be careful with regard to those from whom they received them.<sup>90</sup> T'us b. Kaysan of Yemen advised the students of *Hadith* to learn them from pious persons only,<sup>91</sup> and Abu al-'Aliya relates that whenever a seeker for *Hadith* went to any Traditionist to learn them from him, he enquired first about the piety and reliability of his would-be teacher.<sup>92</sup> Al-Zuhri was of the opinion that the *Isnad* (chain of authorities) was indispensable for a *Hadith*.<sup>93</sup> Abu Zinad states that when he went to Madinah in order to learn *Hadith*, he found there one hundred such Traditionists as were considered reliable in ordinary matters, but unreliable as teachers of *Hadith*—apparently because they did not come up to the high standard of honesty which was expected from the teachers of traditions; the traditions related by them were not, therefore accepted by anyone.<sup>94</sup> Isma'il b. Ibrahim says that only such traditions are to be accepted as are related by persons who have been strict in observing religious duties.<sup>95</sup>

The spirit of scrupulous care with regard to the choice of the teachers of *Hadith* among the Followers was imbibed by their students and kept up by a large number of them throughout the period during which they flourished. Among them Malik b. Anas (93-179/711-795), on going to Madinah in search of *Hadith*, found in the mosque seventy such Traditionists as had gathered their knowledge from the Companions and the Followers, but he accepted traditions only from such of them as were trustworthy, and whenever he had any doubt with regard to any part of a tradition, he would give up the whole of it as unreliable.<sup>96</sup> He held that one should not accept *Ahadith* related by the slow-witted, nor those related by people who told lies ordinarily (even if they were not accused of it in connection with

*Hadith*) nor those related by such eminent, honest, and pious persons as were not conversant with the subject matter of the *Ahadith* which they related.<sup>97</sup>

Many of the contemporaries of Malik shared with him his scrupulous care with regard to the authorities from whom they received the traditions. These include Shu'ba b. al-Hajjaj (83-160/702-776), Sufyan al-Thauri (97-161/715-777), Hammad b. Salama (d. 167/783), Hammad b. Zayd (98-179/716-795), 'Abd Allah Allah b. al-Mubarak (121-181/738-797), Fudayl b. 'Iyad. (d. 187/802), Yahya b. Sa'id al-Qattan (120-198/737-813), and many others.

This careful scrutiny of those who related traditions was continued with unabated vigour by a large number of the students of *Hadith* in the succeeding generations of Traditionists. Al-Shafi'i (156-204/767-819), a student of Malik, and the founder of one of the important schools of Islamic law, made a careful scrutiny of the reliability of not only those from whom he himself received traditions, but also of their authorities.<sup>98</sup> He rejected the *Mursals* of even al-Zuhri!<sup>99</sup> Yahya b. Ma'in (156-233/772-847) did not include any *Hadith* in his works unless they were supported by 30 independent chains of authority.<sup>100</sup> Ibrahim b. Sa'id claims to have included in his collections only such *Ahadith* as were supported by 100 chains of authorities.<sup>101</sup> Ahmad b. Hanbal's caution about authorities is well known. Even on his death-bed, he did not forget to ask his son to strike off a *Hadith* from his great *Musnad* because it was contrary to many more reliable traditions.<sup>102</sup> Al-Bukhari's scrupulous honesty and exactitude are generally admitted. Muslim's scrutiny of the *Rawis* is clearly shown by his instructive introduction to his great work. Abu Da'ud al-Sijistani (200-275/835-910), al-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892), al-Nasa'i (d. 302/914), Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari (224- 310A.H.), 'Abd .Allah b. Muhammad al-Baghawi 214-317/829), and a large number of other Traditionists, who lived in the various periods of the history of *Hadith*, were sincere, honest and scrupulous in the pursuit and propagation of the subject.

## HADITH FOR BEGINNERS

### THE CRITICISM OF THE REPORTERS

These and other sincere devotees of *Hadith* were not content with the mere scrutiny of the reporters of traditions; but they also tried to make known to the whole Islamic world the character of the interested forgers and of the incompetent and erroneous reporters (*Rawis*). During the early period of the history of Islam, when Companions were still living, Ibn 'Umar (who was told that Abu Hurayra included the field-dogs also among the exceptions to the dogs commanded by the Prophet to be killed) did not hesitate to point out that Abu Hurayra had a personal interest in the matter.<sup>103</sup> And, therefore, according to Goldziher, he forged these words. But according to the Muslim traditionists, Ibn 'Umar meant to accept Abu Hurayra's version, because the latter had good reason to know this tradition better. Murra al-Hamdani (d. 71/690), wanted, however, to kill al-Harith on account of his forgeries. Ibrahim al-Nakha'i (d. 96/714) informed his pupils of the doubtful character of al-Harith, and asked them to keep away from Mughira b. Sa'id and Abu Abd al-Rahim,<sup>104</sup> for they were liars. Qatada (d. 117/735) pointed out to the students of *Hadith* the false presumptions of Abu Da'ud; the blind Ibn 'Aun<sup>105</sup> (d. 151/768), being asked about a *Hadith* related to him by Shahr, laid stress on his unreliability. Sufyan al-Thauri, Shu'ba, Malik and Ibn 'Uyana instructed people to make the character of the unreliable reporters known to the public.<sup>106</sup> As a matter of fact, numerous Companions and Followers had criticised various reporters of the traditions; and Shu'ba and Yahya b. Sa'id, who are generally said to be the first critics of the reporters,<sup>107</sup> had only made special efforts in line with their criticism.<sup>108</sup> Ibn 'Adi (277-360/890-970), while describing his predecessors in the field of criticism of the reporters of *Hadith*, mentioned the names of Ibn 'Abbas, 'Ubada b. al-Samit and Anas among the Companions, and of al-Sha'bi, Ibn Sirin and Sa'id b. al-Musayyib among the Followers. He also says that the number of critics of *Rijal* in the early period was comparatively small because of the small number of weak reporters, which

reduced the possibility of mistakes and forgeries. When about the middle of the second century, the erroneous reporters increased in number, a group of important Traditionists held a discussion on the integrity and reliability of the reporters of traditions. These included al-A'mash, Shu'ba, Malik, Ma'mar, Hisham al-Dastuwa'i, al-Auza'i, al-Thauri, Ibn al-Majishun, Hammad b. Salama, Layth b. Sa'd, and after them, Hushaym, Ibn al-Mubarak, Abu Ishaq al-Fizari, al-Mu'afi b. 'Imran, Bishr b. al-Mufaddal Ibn 'Uyana, Ibn 'Ulayya, Ibn Wahb and Waki'.<sup>109</sup>

These honest Traditionists were guided in their pursuit of *Hadith* neither by the government and party leaders, nor by sectarian and personal considerations, but by the pure love of genuine traditions. The power and importance of the Umayyads and the Abbasids made little difference to them. Even under the Abbasids, who by their outward show of love for religion tried to reconcile them, the Traditionists continued their strict neutrality towards the government and the various parties striving for power. Of the three 'Abd Allahs, who may be considered as pillars of the traditions, the son of 'Umar b. al-Khattab took no part in civil strife, and rejected the suggestion of Marwan that he should make a bid for the caliphate.<sup>110</sup> 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas observed strict neutrality in the fight for the caliphate between Ibn al-Zubayr and 'Abd al-Malik.<sup>111</sup> 'Abd Allah b. 'Amar b. al-'As went as far as the field of Siffin on account of the persistence of his father, but took no part in the battle between Mu'awiya and 'Ali, and throughout the rest of his life, he repented of even having gone to the field.<sup>112</sup> Abu Dhar,<sup>113</sup> Muhammad b. Maslama,<sup>114</sup> Sa'id b. al-Musayyib,<sup>115</sup> abu al-'Aliya,<sup>116</sup> al-Mutarraf,<sup>117</sup> al-Hassan b. Yasar,<sup>118</sup> al-Masruq,<sup>119</sup> and many other Companions and Followers maintained strict neutrality during the civil strife between the various parties in the early history of Islam. Some of them preferred prison and physical torture to giving support to any party against their own convictions. For example, Sa'id b. al-Musayyib was whipped by Ibn al-Zubayr, and was put to torture by Hisham b. Isma'il



who wanted him to declare allegiance to 'Abd Allah or to the sons of 'Abd al-Malik. Yahya b. abi Kuthayr (d. 129/746) was severely tortured for condemning the Umayyads.<sup>120</sup> 'Ubayd Allah b. Rafi was beaten by the order of 'Amr b. Sa'id.<sup>121</sup> Malik was whipped by the order of al-Mansur, because some of his decrees (*Fatawa*) did not suit the latter.<sup>122</sup> Sufyan al-Thauri (97-161/715-777) was ordered by the same caliph to be put to death.<sup>123</sup>

The unpleasant and heated conversations between Ahnaf b. Qays and Mu'awiya,<sup>124</sup> between al-A'mash and 'Abd al-Malik,<sup>125</sup> between Salim and Sulayman b. 'Abd al-Malik,<sup>126</sup> between Abu Hazim and the same caliph,<sup>127</sup> between al-Hasan al-Basri and 'Umar b. Hubayra,<sup>128</sup> and between al-Auza'i and 'Abd Allah b. 'Ali,<sup>129</sup> clearly show the highly strained relationship between the orthodox Traditionists and the Umayyad as well as the Abbasid rulers and authorities. Under the Abbasids also many scrupulous orthodox Muslim scholars (like Abu Hanifa,<sup>130</sup> Sufyan al-Thauri,<sup>131</sup> etc.) continued their attitude of indifference towards the caliphs and their government. Some of these scholars— e.g. Ahmad b. Hanbal,<sup>132</sup> Nu'aym b. Hammad,<sup>133</sup> Yusuf b. Sa'id,<sup>134</sup> Abu Mush'ir,<sup>135</sup> and others—refused to agree with the views of the caliph al-Ma'mun, and suffered imprisonment and serve punishment. As a matter of fact, indifference towards the cruel rulers was a definite principle with them.<sup>136</sup> Consequently, we find that few of the compilers of the works on *Hadith* which are accepted by the Muslim world as standard and authoritative books on the subject, and were compiled mainly under the Abbasids, had been either in the employment of the caliphs or favourites of their court.

It is due to the continuous, hard labour of these honest and scrupulous Traditionists that the *Ahadith* of Muhammad have been saved from utter loss, and have come down to us in their present form. During the very early period in the history of Islam, when the Companions, who had been the only custodians of *Hadith* had settled down in different towns, they undertook long, arduous journeys, met them in

their newly adopted homes, associated with them as long as necessary, and collected together the knowledge which had been scattered by the Companions throughout the vast Islamic empire.

#### TRAVELS IN QUEST OF KNOWLEDGE (*Traditions*)

Long travels in quest of knowledge were recommended by Muhammad himself in many of his sayings, which were related by various independent authorities. Such traditions are found in many important collections of *Hadith*. Some of the Companions themselves undertook long journeys, either to learn a *Hadith* or to refresh their memory of it. Abu Ayyub travelled from Madinah to Egypt just for the sake of refreshing his memory on a *Hadith* which he together with 'Uqba b. 'Amir—had learnt from Muhammad himself.<sup>137</sup> Jabir b. 'Abd Allah travelled for one whole month in order to hear from the lips of 'Abd Allah b. Unays only one *Hadith* which Jabir had already learnt through another person.<sup>138</sup> Another Companion went from Madinah to Damascus, solely for the purpose of hearing from the lips of Abu Darda a *Hadith* which he had already received from him through one of his friends<sup>139</sup>.

The precepts of Muhammad and the example of his Companions stimulated the Followers, and they spared no pains in their pursuit of knowledge (*Hadith*). They travelled from place to place in order to gather the knowledge of as many *Ahadith* as possible and returned home like bees laden with honey to impart the precious store they had accumulated to the crowd of their eager disciples.

Makhul (d. 112/730) travelled through Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Hijaz, and gathered knowledge of all the *Ahadith* which he could obtain from such Companions as lived at these places.<sup>140</sup> He used to boast that for the sake of knowledge he had "travelled round the world."<sup>141</sup> Sha'bi (d. 104/722) said in reply to a question as to how he had gathered the knowledge of such a large number of *Ahadith*

: "By hard work, long travels and great patience."<sup>142</sup> He used to say that, if for the sake of only one word of wisdom anyone travelled from one end of Syria to the other end of al-Yaman, he (al-Sha`bi) would not consider his journey to have been undertaken in vain.<sup>143</sup> Al-Masruq (d. 63/682) travelled so much for the sake of *Hadith* that he was known as *Abu al-Safar* (the Traveller). Sa'id b. al-Musayyib (d. 94/712) used to travel for days and nights just to learn a single *Hadith*.<sup>144</sup>

By and by, long journeys in quest of knowledge became a fashion, and from the middle of the second century after the Hijra, the seekers after *Hadith* began to vie with one another in undertaking such journeys. "From one end of the Muslim world to the other, from Andalusia to Central Asia", says Goldziher, "wandered the assiduous, indefatigable seekers of *Hadith*, who gathered traditions from every place in order to relate them to their listeners. This was the only possible method of collecting together in an authentic form the *Ahadith* which were scattered in the various provinces. The honourable title of *al-Rahhal* (the great traveller) or *al-Jawwal* (the great wanderer) is seldom used with them in any sense other than what is generally understood by them. The title *Tawwaf al-Aqalim* (the wanderer round the world) is no hyperbolical designation for the travellers among whom there were some such persons as could boast to have travelled four times throughout the East and the West." "They travelled throughout these countries," adds Goldziher, "not for the sake of sight-seeing and gaining experience, but in order to meet the Traditionists at these places, to hear traditions from them and to profit by each of them—just like the bird that sits on a tree only to pick its leaves."<sup>145</sup>

These seekers of *Hadith* gathered their knowledge from every source of which they were aware, and took from each source all that they could obtain from it. This is apparent from the large number of teachers of some of them, and from the long time which some of them spent with some of their teachers. Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i (d. 126/743), for example,

learnt *Hadith* from 300-400 teachers;<sup>146</sup> 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak (d. 181/797), from 1100;<sup>147</sup> Malik b. Anas, from 900.<sup>148</sup>... Hisham b. 'Abd Allah learnt from 1700 teachers;<sup>149</sup> Abu Nu'aym, from 700<sup>150</sup> or 800; Ibn 'Asakir, from 1300 traditionists.<sup>151</sup> Al-Zuhri kept the company of Sa'id b. al-Musayyib for 10 years.<sup>152</sup> Hammad b. Zayd spent 20 years in the company of Ayyub;<sup>153</sup> Rabi' b. Anas went frequently to Hasan Basri for the same period.<sup>154</sup> 'Amr b. Zirara associated with Ibn 'Ulayya for 23 years.<sup>155</sup> Ibn Jurayj kept the company of 'Ata' for 18 years;<sup>156</sup> and Thabit b. Aslam studied *Hadith* with Malik b. Anas for 40 years.<sup>157</sup>

Thus the honest, hard work and incredible, marvellous activity of the Followers and of the succeeding generations of Muslims made it possible to collect the reports of the sayings and the doings of Muhammad, which were scattered in all the various parts of the large dominions. The first organized attempt at their collection, as we have seen, was made about the end of the first century by the pious caliph, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz. The reports with regard to his activities in connection with the collection of *Ahadith* are found in many important early works connected with the subject—e.g. the *Muwatta* of Malik,<sup>158</sup> the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari, and the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'id. These reports, of course, differ from one another in certain minor details. But the main facts are common to them all. The pious nature of the caliph and his religious enthusiasm as well as the peaceful atmosphere of his reign support the statements contained in these early works. Dr. Sprenger accepts this theory of the beginning of the collection of *Ahadith*. But Goldziher (and after him Guillaume) doubt the reliability of these reports; but their arguments are not conclusive.<sup>159</sup>

Once begun, the collection of *Ahadith* went up by leaps and bounds. The next two hundred years saw the compilation of almost all the important works in the *Hadith* literature, most of which were produced by honest and scrupulous scholars who had little to do with political groups or sects, and who had little care for worldly gains. These scholars

traced the lives and discussed the characters of all the reporters of traditions, and produced side by side with their collection of *Hadith* a vast literature on the reporters as an aid to the formal criticism of *Ahadith*. They discussed the comparative value of the reliability of *Ahadith*, and produced an extensive literature on the *Maudu'at* (forged traditions). They founded and developed various important branches of learning for the sake of formal as well as material criticism of *Hadith*.

### Notes

1. JT,, ii, 90.
2. TdH, vol. i, p. 22.
3. MAH, vol. v, p. 328.
4. TIS, vol. ii, part 2, p. 23.
5. *Ibid*.
6. *Ibid*. vol v, p. 213.
7. JBI, part 1, p. 45.
8. MUH.
9. FM, pp. 396-97.
10. *Ibid*.
11. TIS, vol. v, p. 140.
12. TdH, vol. i, p. 97.
13. WA, No. 574.
14. JBI, i., 97.
15. MUd, i, 17.
16. TA, pp. 629-30.
17. TdH, i, p. 290.
18. TA, p. 174.
19. TdH, i, p. 355.
20. MUd, i, p. 17.
21. *Ibid*.
22. TdH, i, p. 172.
23. TdH, ii, p. 147.
24. JBI, i, p. 98.
25. MFB, p. 566.
26. JBI, i, p. 97-98.
27. TR, p. 275.
28. TA, p. 719.
29. *Ibid*. p. 534.
30. TdH, i, p. 290.
31. TB, ix, p. 33.
32. TH, vii, p. 71.
33. TdH, i, p. 291.
34. TH, ix, p. 100; TdT, ii, p. 196; TB, vi, p. 122.
35. A vast majority of the students of *Hadith* mentioned here may have been irregular students. As regards the regular ones, their number must

naturally have been limited. For instance, the number (1,000) of students who attended the school of *Hadith* founded by Abu Ali al-Husayni (d. 393 A.H.) at Nishapur is remarkable for an organized institution. See Elss, "Madrassa", J. Pedersen, pp. 300-310. It is also stated in this article (p. 309) that "the *madaris* introduced an innovation into the relationship of teacher to student, when a definite number of students (as a rule twenty) was allotted to a particular teacher."

36. *Op. cit.*
37. TA, 532.
38. See also *infra*, chapter ix.
39. TR, 103.
40. *Ibid.*
41. MUd, i, 286.
42. MSt, iii, 44; cf. WA, No. 764.
43. MUd, vi, 94.
44. IM, v. No. 1136.
45. TR, 103.
46. IM, iv, No. 1296.
47. TI, 73.
48. IM, v, No. 466.
49. *Ibid*, No. 431.
50. MSt, ii, ch. 2.
51. Ibn al Jauzi (Maudu'al).
52. See MSt, ii, 161 f.
53. TIS, v, 34.
54. MSt, ii, 161-62.
55. KQ, 303-304, fn.
56. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (d. 68/687) had condemned them as enemies of God. SB, "Tafsir, Kalif", vol. iii, p. 100.
57. MI, i, No. 140; MSt, ii, 160.
58. MSt, ii, 164; KAg, xii, p. 5.
59. *Ibid.*
60. KAm,
61. YD, iii, 179.
62. MSt, ii, 168.
63. ATb, iii, 2131.
64. MIt, iii, 245; TR, 102.
65. MIt, i, 7-8.
66. MIt, 67; IM, i, 832.
67. *Ibid*, i, 419.
68. LM, vi, No. 819.
69. *Ibid*. No. 480; TR, 102.
70. MIt, i, No. 321.
71. *Ibid*, ii, 13.
72. *Ibid*, 23.
73. *Ibid*, iii, 257.
74. MSt, ii, 48.
75. TR, 102.
76. TR 100 *et al.*
77. MIt, i, No. 22.
78. *Ibid*, No. 562.
79. *Ibid*, No. 564.
80. *Ibid*, No. 1816.
81. *Ibid*, No. 403.

82. *Ibid*, ii, 128.
83. *Ibid*, i, No. 2918.
84. *Ibid*, No. 3641.
85. *Ibid*, No. 3950.
86. JBI, ii, 129
87. See *supra*, pp. 13ff.
88. JBI, ii, 132.
89. *Ibid*, i, 80.
90. SM, i, 11.
91. SD, 61.
92. SM, i, 4.
93. TR, 183.
94. SM, i, 12.
95. SD, 61.
96. TA, 531-32.
97. JBI, ii, 48 ; TD, iv, 172.
98. RSH, 57 ff.
99. TK, i, 10.
100. TA, 629; TH, viii, 17.
101. MIt, i, 18; TH, viii, 110.
102. TK, i, 202-203.
103. ZDMG, vol. xxiii, p. 593, "Ursprung und Bedeutung der Tabaqat", Loth;  
MSt, ii, 49.
104. SM, i, 15.
105. *Ibid*, 16.
106. *Ibid*, i, 13.
107. TA, 316.
108. TR, 262.
109. Quoted by al Jazairi. TN, 114.
110. TIS, vol. iv, part 2, p. 111.
111. UGH, iii, 194.
112. *Ibid*, 234.
113. TIS, vol. iv, part 1, p. 161
114. *Ibid*, iii, 2, p 20.
115. *Ibid*, v, pp. 90 ff.
116. TIS, viii, 1, p. 82.
117. *Ibid*, 103.
118. *Ibid*, vii, 1, p. 119.
119. *Ibid*, vi, p. 52.
120. *Ibid*, v, pp. 90, 93, 95-96.
121. TdH, i, 115.
122. KK, i, 284.
123. WA, No. 560.
124. TA, 287.
125. WA, No. 304.
126. *Ibid*, No. 270.
127. *Ibid*, Nos. 251, 278.
128. *Ibid*, No. 155.
129. TdH, i, 162-64.
130. WA, No. 775.
131. TdH, i, 183 ff.
132. TK, i, 203-16.
133. TdH, ii, 6 ff.
134. *ibid*, 161 ff.

135. TH, vii, 62.
136. JBI, i, 163-186.
137. JBI, i, 93-94.
138. *Ibid*, 35.
139. *Ibid*.
140. TdH, i, 95.
141. TT, iv, No. 145.
142. TdH, i, 71.
143. JBI, i, 95.
144. TdH, i, 46 ff.
145. MSt, ii, 177.
146. TA, 646.
147. TdH, i, 255.
148. TA, 353.
149. TH, vii, 69.
150. *Ibid*, v, 45.
151. MUd, v, 140.
152. TIS ii, 2, p. 131.
153. TA, 218.
154. *Ibid*, 210.
155. TdH, i, 153.
156. TdH, i, 111.
157. See *supra*, p. 9 et al.
158. MSt, ii, 210-11.



## CHAPTER 4

### *Hadith Literature*

#### THE BEGINNINGS

The beginning of *Hadith* literature must be traced back to the letters, laws and treaties which were dictated by the Prophet of Islam himself, and were preserved in his time. In like manner, it must be traced to the numerous *Sahifas* which were compiled by the Companions and the Followers, to which reference has already been made in this work. Goldziher has mentioned<sup>1</sup> several of these *Sahifas*. Horovitz is uncertain about the genuineness of the *Sahifas* ascribed to the Companions; but he has no doubt about the genuineness of those compiled by the Followers. "Already in the generation following that of the Companions of the prophet (*Ashab* or *Sahaba*), that of the *Tabi'un*", he says, "people had begun to collect the traditions of the sayings and doings of the Prophet which were current at the time. If the data for the *Ahadith* of a number of the Companions of the Prophet recorded on leaves (*Sahaif*) or in books (*kutub*) are partly of uncertain worth, still there can be no doubt that such written records were no longer a rarity in the generation of the *Tabi'un*, who derived this knowledge from the Companions."<sup>2</sup>

The discovery of the *Sahifa* of Hammam b. Munabbih, which has been published by Dr. Hamidullah, shows the nature and character of these *Sahifas*. It proves that they were not mere memoranda as Goldziher suggests, but were complete records of some of the sayings of Muhammad, just like those found in the later collections of *Hadith*.

Even before the advent of Islam, however, certain books in Arabic existed which infused a new spirit and fresh energy

into Arab literary activity. It has already been proved that books were written on many branches of Arabic literature during the second half of the first century of the Islamic era. During the reign of Mu'awiya I, 'Abid b. Sharya wrote a book on the pre-Islamic kings of Arabia,<sup>4</sup> which enjoyed some popularity during the 10th century A.D.<sup>5</sup> Suhar b. al-'Abbas, who lived during the reign of the same caliph, wrote a book on proverbs.<sup>6</sup> Theodocus, a physician in the court of al-Hajjaj, wrote several books on Medicine.<sup>7</sup> Aban collected (according to Professor Horovitz) materials for a book on *Maghazi*.<sup>8</sup> 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, who died about the end of the first century of the Hijra, is said to have written a book on the said subject. "Although nowhere in the older sources", says Horovitz,<sup>9</sup> "is it said that 'Urwa composed an actual book on the *Maghazi*, it is nonetheless certain that he collected and set forth a series of the most important events in the Prophet's life." The same collector of *Maghazi* also compiled some books on *Fiqh* which he burnt on the day of the battle of Harra.<sup>10</sup> How, then, could the Muslims of those by-gone days have neglected the collection of *Ahadith*, which had been accepted by them ever since the life-time of the Prophet as an authority next to the Qur'an for all their religious and social problems?

The early sources of *Hadith* fall into three distinct groups :— First, the books on *Maghazi* or *Sirat*, like those of Ibn Ishaq and others, in which are found most of the historical *Ahadith*. Second, the books on *Fiqh*, like the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik and the *Kitab al-Umm* of al-Shafi'i, in which are found a large number of legal *Ahadith*. Third, the works in which *Ahadith* as such have been collected. It is with some of these works and their authors that we propose to deal in this chapter.

#### MANY OF THE MUSNADS ASCRIBED TO EARLY AUTHORS WERE COMPILED LONG AFTER THEM

Of all the various classes of *Hadith* works (which have been described earlier) the *Musnads* appear to be the earliest

in origin. But many of those generally ascribed to some of the early authorities on *Hadith* were, in fact, compiled by some of the later Traditionists who collected together such *Ahadith* as were related to them by, or on the authority of any one important *rawi*. Such are the *Musnads* of Abu Hanifa, al-Shafi'i, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, and some others, none of whom is known to have compiled any *Musnad* work. The *Musnad* which is generally known as that of Abu Hanifa was compiled by Abu al-Mu'ayyid Muhammad b. Mahmud al-khwarizmi (d. 665/1257).<sup>11</sup> The *Musnad* of al-Shafi'i was compiled on the basis of his *Kitab al-Umm* and *al-Mabsut* by Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Asamm (d. 246/860).<sup>12</sup> The work known as the *Musnad* of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz was compiled by al-Baghandi<sup>13</sup> (d. 282/895). The *Musnad* of Abu Da'ud al-Tayalisi also, which is considered to be the earliest *Musnad* work received by us,<sup>14</sup> had not been compiled in its present form by al-Tayalisi himself, but by a certain Traditionist of Khurasan at a later date.<sup>15</sup>

An old, rare and important manuscript of this work has been preserved in the Oriental Public Library of Patna, and has been fully described by Maulawi 'Abd al-Hamid in the catalogue of the MSS of *Hadith* works in the O.P. Library at Bankipore.<sup>16</sup> It was on the basis of this manuscript that the Hyderabad edition of the *Musnad* by the Da'irat al-Ma'arif of Hyderabad was published.

*Life of al-Tayalisi.* Abu Da'ud, Sulayman b. Da'ud b. al-Jarud al-Tayalisi, to whom the *Musnad* is generally ascribed, was of Persian origin. He was born in the year 133/750-51 of the Hijra. He studied traditions with more than a thousand Traditionists of his time, among whom many prominent persons are mentioned—e.g. Shu'ba al-Tayalisi seems to have specialized in traditions related by him. Sufyan al-Thauri, and others. He had a sharp, retentive memory, and is said to have dictated 40,000 traditions without using any notes. During his lifetime, he was accepted as an authority on *Hadith* in general and as a specialist in the long *Ahadith* in particular. The students of traditions flocked around him

from every part of the Muslim world. His teacher, Shu'ba, having heard him discuss certain traditions with some students, confessed that he himself could not do better. Strict Traditionists, like Ahmad b. Hanbal and 'Ali b. al-Madini, accepted Tayalisi's authority and related traditions from him. But he has been censured by some traditionists. The majority of them, however, attribute his mistakes the slip of his memory. He contracted *elephantiasis* on account of his excessive use of *Baladhur* (*anacardia*), and died in the year 203/813 at the age of 70.<sup>17</sup>

*The Musnad.* In the present printed edition, this work consists of 2726 traditions, which are related by 281 Companions whose narratives are given under their names. These are arranged in the order of (i) the first four caliphs; (ii) the rest of the Badriyun; (ii) the Muhajirun; (iv) the Ansar; (v) the women; and (vi) the youngest Companions.

The printed text of the *Musnad* as well as its Patna MS appeared to be incomplete. The traditions related by 'Abbas b. al-Muttalib, al-Fadl b. 'Abbas, 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far, Ka'b b. Malik, Salma b. al-Akwa, 'Sahl b. Sa'd, Mu'awiya b. Abi Sufyan, and 'Amar b. al-As, to which reference has been made on other pages, are entirely missing from the body of the book. Some of the traditions related by 'Umar have also been misplaced.<sup>18</sup>

Al-Tayalisi, however, to whom the *Musnad* is generally ascribed, had neither compiled it nor arranged it in its present form. It is the work of his student, Yunus b. Habib, who collected together the traditions which he had received from Abu Da'ud al-Tayalisi, and arranged them in the form of the present *Musnad*. "It was some of the traditionists of Khurasan," says Haji Khalifa,<sup>19</sup> "who collected together the traditions which were related by Yusuf (Yunus) b. Habib from Abu Da'ud." Haji Khalifa is right in denying that the *Musnad* was compiled by al-Tayalisi himself; but he seems to be wrong in attributing it to the students of Yunus. The internal evidence shows that Yunus himself was the compiler of the *Musnad*.<sup>20</sup>

Whoever the compiler of the *Musnad* may have been, its text clearly shows that he, as well as the authorities from whom he received the traditions, had been careful in handling them. Wherever there is any doubt in the text of a tradition, it has been pointed out. In some cases, various possible readings of certain expressions used in a tradition have been given; in some cases, certain explanatory phrases have been added—care having been taken that these additions might not be mistaken for a part of the text itself.<sup>21</sup> In some cases it has been pointed out that some of the authorities had doubts with regard to a part of the text,<sup>22</sup> but that they cleared it by referring to some other authorities of their own time.<sup>23</sup> If a tradition was received through more than one source, the fact has been pointed out at the end of the tradition. In some cases where the identity of a narrator had been doubtful (because more than one narrator bore the same name), efforts have been made to establish his identity.<sup>24</sup> In some cases the character of some of the authorities has also been mentioned.<sup>25</sup> Certain traditions are related by narrators of unknown identity.<sup>26</sup> In some cases it has been pointed out that the tradition had been carried back to the Prophet by some narrators, and was stopped at a *Sahabi* by others.<sup>27</sup>

The topics of the traditions contained in the *Musnad* are as varied and numerous as those of any other collection of *Ahadith*. But those relating to Miracles, personal or tribal virtues of the Companions, and prophecies with regard to future events or sects in Islam are very few.

The book appears to have enjoyed great popularity till the eighth century of the Hijra. The Patna manuscript alone bears the names of more than 300 male and female students of *Hadith*, who had read it at different periods. Among them are found the names of such eminent Traditionists as al-Dhahabi, al-Mizzi and others.<sup>28</sup> After the eighth century, it lost its popularity—so much so that now its manuscript has become extremely rare.

The most important and exhaustive of all the *Musnad* work which we have received is that of Iman Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal al-Marwazi al-Shaybani. His remarkably saintly, selfless life, and his firm stand on his own convictions in the face of the tyrannical inquisition and persecution (started by al-Ma'mun and continued in accordance with his will by al-Wathiq and al-Mutawakkil) created a halo of sanctity round his great collection of traditions. In spite of its great bulk, it survived the vicissitudes of time and was printed at Cairo in 1896.<sup>29</sup>

*Life of Ahmad b. Hanbal.* Iman Ahmad, as his *misba* shows, was descended from the great Shaybani tribe of the Arabs. The members of this tribe had taken an important part in the early conquest of Iraq and Khurasan by the Arabs, and in the civil wars between the Hashimites and the Umayyads (as partisans of the former). Ibn al-Haytham, a Shaybani chief at Kufa, was the first in that town to call people to 'Ali's side. Husayn, a Shaybani, was the standard-bearer of the tribe of Rabi'a at the battle of Siffin; and 'Ali wrote some appreciative verses in his praise.<sup>30</sup> Khalid b. al-Ma'mar, also a Shaybani, had taken a leading part on behalf of 'Ali in the same battle.<sup>31</sup> The sympathy of the Shaybani for the Banu Hashim seems to have continued even after the Umayyads were well established on the throne. Khalid b. Ibrahim Abu Da'ud, who succeeded Abu Muslim as governor of Khurasan, had been one of the *Naquibs* of the Abbasids against the Umayyads.<sup>32</sup> One Hayyan, the perfumer, (who is mentioned by al-Dinawari as one of the important early Abbasid propagandists in Khurasan)<sup>33</sup> may also be the same Hayyan who is mentioned among the forefathers of Ahmad b. Hanbal. One of Ahmad's forefathers was also a general of Khurasan who, according to Patton, fought to overthrow the Umayyads and to replace them by the Abbasids.<sup>34</sup>

Ahmad himself was born in Baghdad in 164/780, where he was carefully brought up by his mother, his father having died during Ahmad's infancy. There too he received his early

education with the teacher of the day, and began the study of *Hadith* at the age of 15 with Ibrahim b. 'Ulayya.<sup>35</sup> Having completed his studies of *Hadith* with all the Traditionists of Baghdad, he started on his journey 'in search of knowledge' in the year 183/799. He wandered through Basra, Kufa, Yaman, the Hijaz, and other centres of *Hadith* learning, attending the lectures of the Traditionists, taking notes on them, and discussing them with the important Traditionists and fellow students. He returned to Baghdad laden with his precious store of 'knowledge' about the year 195, when he met Iman al Shafi'i and studied with him *Usul al-Fiqh* and *Fiqh*.<sup>36</sup>

Ahmad b. Hanbal appears to have assumed the role of a lecturer on traditions at an early age. It is said that a large number of students flocked round him in order to hear his lectures on *Hadith* in a mosque in Baghdad in the year 189, when he went there for a short time.<sup>37</sup> He made the service and teaching of traditions the sole objects and missions of his life, and peacefully went on with these pursuits till the year 218/833 when a storm of persecution of the theologians arose throughout the Abbasid caliphate.

*The Persecution.* The caliph al-Ma'mun accepted, under the influence of his philosophically-minded associates, the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an. He invited the Muslim theologians and Traditionists to accept this doctrine. Some accepted it; others rejected it. Threats succeeded with a few more, and persecution with a few others. But a few important Traditionists, including Ahmad, refused to yield. The caliph, who was then at Tarsus, ordered that they should be put in chains and sent to him. The orders were carried out. But the caliph himself died before the pious prisoners had reached their destination. His death, however, was of no avail to the unfortunate prisoners. For Ma'mun had made a will wherein he asked his successor to carry out his wishes with regard to the propagation of the doctrine of the creation of the Qur'an. His two immediate successors, al-Mu'tasim and al-Wathiq, carried out his will with force and vigour and

did not fail to use torture and persecution in order to achieve their end. This *Mihna* (persecution) was continued with varying vigour till the third year of the reign of al-Mutawakkil who stopped it in the year 234/848.

The great personality of al-Ma'mun and the splendour of his court secured the conversion of the great mass of Muslim theologians to his views. Even such great Traditionists as Yahya b. Ma'in and 'Ali b. al-Madini took refuge behind the thin veil of *Taqiya* ('disguise'), and surrendered their souls to the sword. It was Ahmad b. Hanbal who at this serious juncture proved to be the saviours of Orthodoxy and Freedom of Conscience and Faith in Islam. He refused to submit to the dictates of the caliph against his own conscience, and stood firm like a rock. He tried to show the fallacies in the false reasoning of his opponents at the discussions; he refused to yield to their show of force and threats, and boldly and patiently endured their persecutions. He was kept in prison for eighteen months; he was whipped by 150 executioners one after another; his wrist was broken; he was badly wounded; and he lost consciousness. But he kept the purity of his conscience, and came out of the trial with the greatest credit. Bishr b. al-Harith rightly said that when God cast Ahmad b. Hanbal into the fire, he came out of it like pure gold. More creditable for Ahmad than his firmness at the fateful trial, however, was his unexampled generosity towards his enemies and persecutors against none of whom he showed any ill will. Even against Ahmad b. Abi Du'ad, who had taken the most prominent part against him in his *Mihna*, he scrupulously abstained from expressing any opinion.<sup>38</sup>

After the *Mihna*, Ahmad lived for about 8 years. The greater part of this period he is said to have devoted to teaching.<sup>39</sup> The rest he spent in prayers. He died in the year 241 at the ripe old age of 77. A wonderful scene of sorrow and grief ensued. Not only over the whole of the great metropolis, but also over distant places, there was cast a gloom of melancholy. His funeral was attended by a large crowd estimated to be between 600,000 and 2,500,000. It was



something "the like of which must seldom have been witnessed anywhere."<sup>40</sup>

Throughout his life, Ahmad showed himself to be exemplary in character. For money, which is a great source of corruption, he had little love. He always refused pecuniary help, whether great or small, from the rich princes as well as from poor associates and friends.<sup>41</sup> He cut off his connection with his sons, Salih and 'Abd Allah, because they had accepted stipends from the caliph.<sup>42</sup> As a matter of fact, he hated luxury;<sup>43</sup> and his needs were few, which he always met by means of what he himself earned. Though in his religious beliefs he was extremely firm and strong, by nature he was very gentle, and was anxious not to do any harm to anyone.<sup>44</sup> Honesty and justice were the most remarkable elements of his character.

Ahmad's vast and profound knowledge of the traditions, his strictly pious and selfless life, his strong character, his firm and courageous stand for Orthodoxy against the persecution by the caliphs, his complete indifference to the court and the courtiers, and his forceful and inspiring personality established his reputation as an Imam and as the greatest authority on *Hadith* in the whole Islamic world.<sup>45</sup> "His personality in his lifetime and after his death", says Patton, "was a great force in the Muslim world, and it seems yet to be as powerful in its influence as the principles which he enunciated."<sup>46</sup> Even to-day his memory stands as a symbol of orthodoxy, and is a source of inspiration to the Muslim world.

Ahmad devoted the whole of his life, except the last few years, to the service of *Hadith*, learning it with the renowned Traditionists of his time, spreading it through the large crowd of his students, throughout the length and breadth of the Muslim world, and writing on its basis, and on that of the Qur'an, books on various theological problems. Thirteen of these books are mentioned by Ibn al-Nadim in his *Fihrist*;<sup>47</sup> and some others, e.g. *Kitab al-salat*, have been published in his name.

*The Musnad.* The most important of Ahmad's works is his *Musnad* which contains the largest number of *Ahadith* that has been received by us, and which may aptly be called his *magnum opus*. The period of compilation of this work is not known. But from the nature as well as the contents of the work itself, it is clear that it must have occupied the compiler's mind for a long time.

Ahmad's main object in compiling this huge book was to collect together neither all the strictly genuine traditions, nor all those relating to any particular subject or supporting any particular school of thought in Islam, but to put together all such traditions of the Prophet as according to Ahmad were likely to prove genuine (if put to the test), and could therefore for the time being serve as bases for argument. The traditions not included in the *Musnad* have no force, Ahmad is reported to have said.<sup>48</sup> But he never claimed that all that it included was genuine or reliable. On the contrary, he struck off many traditions from his book; and even when he was on his death-bed, he asked his son to delete a *Hadith*<sup>49</sup> from the *Musnad*, which shows that he was not sure of the authenticity of the whole content of his work.

In order to achieve his end, Ahmad ransacked his own vast store of knowledge as well as all of the available literature on the subject.<sup>50</sup> He sifted 30,000 traditions out of 750,000 of them narrated by 700 Companions, relating to widely varied subjects, viz. *Maghazi*, *Manaqib*, Rituals, Laws, Prophecies, etc.<sup>51</sup> He read out the various parts of his notes to his students, and also to his sons and nephew over a period of 13 years.<sup>52</sup> He wanted to put his notes together in the form of a *Musnad*. But death overtook him, and consequently the onerous task of arranging the vast materials collected by Ahmad, was left to his son, 'Abd Allah, who edited the notes of his father.<sup>53</sup>

Ahmad had not been strict in the choice of his materials and authorities. He included in his notes even such matters as could by no means fall within the scope of traditions. Many of the traditions contained in his *Musnad* are declared

by the Traditionists of later date to be baseless and *maudu* '(forged)<sup>54</sup> and many of the narrators relied upon by Ahmad have been declared by the authorities on *Asma' al-Rijal* as unreliable.

Throughout this huge collection of Ahadith, Ahmad b. Hanbal showed the same scrupulous care for minutiæ in his reporting of traditions from his own authorities — whatever their value — as had marked his entire career. If he received a *Hadith* from more than one narrator, he pointed out the least difference that existed between their reports. For instance, in a *Hadith* reported to him respectively by Waki 'and by Abu Mu'awiya, the former used the word *Imam*, and the latter used the word *Amir*, which difference Ahmad b. Hanbal did not fail to point out explicitly.<sup>55</sup> In another *Hadith*, two earlier *Rawis* differed in the use of *w* and *aw*; Ahmad recorded the difference, and gave the two versions which were handed down to him.<sup>56</sup> In another *Hadith*, the difference in the use of *ilayhi* and '*alayhi* is pointed out.<sup>57</sup> If the same narrator reported the same *Hadith* with certain differences, it was also pointed out by Ahmad. In a *Hadith* narrated by Yazid b. Harun, the change in his narration from *l'ukhrah* to *b'ukhrah* was noted.<sup>58</sup> The same exactitude is shown in several other instances also.<sup>59</sup> If any correction or amendment in the text or in the *isnad* of a *Hadith* was suggested to Ahmad b. Hanbal, he did not fail to make the necessary changes in his manuscript.<sup>60</sup>

Ahmad's son, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd Allah, maintained the same scrupulous care and thoroughness of his father in editing the materials collected by him. He collated the whole of the huge but incomplete manuscript of his father with his own notes, which he had made at his and other Traditionists' lectures; he also collated it with what he had learnt from him and others during conversations and general discussions with them.<sup>61</sup>

In the case of such *Ahadith* as 'Abd Allah had heard from his father, but which had been struck off the manuscript, 'Abd Allah pointed out in his notes the change that had been

made in the manuscript.<sup>62</sup> Where he found a slip of the pen in the manuscript of his father, he corrected it and reproduced the original in his notes; in some cases, he only pointed out that there was some mistake in the text.<sup>63</sup> Where he had any misgivings about the text of the manuscript, he frankly expressed his doubt.<sup>64</sup> In some cases, he added<sup>65</sup> explanatory notes as well as numerous *Ahadith* taken from sources other than the manuscript he had been editing.<sup>66</sup> In all these cases he took great care that his own additions would not be mistaken by the reader for parts of the manuscript itself. In this way, he appears to have taken great care to keep the text of the manuscript as exact as possible. For example, he reproduced the words written in the original manuscript in separate letters, not joined together (*al-muqatta'at*), and added a note saying: "It was written in this way in my father's manuscript; but when he read it to us, he pronounced it as one word."<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, 'Abd Allāh was criticised by an eminent Indian Traditionist of the last century, who said that the editor ('Abd Allah) of Ahmad b. Hanbal's *Musnad* had committed many mistakes in arranging and editing the work, including the narrations of the Madinites in the *musnad* of the Syrians, and those of the Syrians in that of the Madinites.<sup>68</sup>

Ahmad's *Musnad*, however, occupied an important position in the *Hadith* literature, and served as an important source for various writers on different subjects in Arabic literature. "Among the *Musnad* works", says Goldziher, "the *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal occupies the most stable position. The great esteem enjoyed by his memory in the pious world of Islam, the piety which hallowed his name and which for a long time served as a magic word against the most stubborn adversary belonging to the Mu'tazili school, and stood as a symbol of Orthodoxy, saved his collection of *Hadith* from the complete literary fall from which most of the works of its type have suffered. It maintained its position in literature also for a long time as a source for important works and compilations."<sup>69</sup>

Of the numerous scholars and authors who used the

*Musnad* as a subject for their commentary or adaptations or as a source for their own works or compilation, some may be mentioned here. Abu 'Umar Muhammad b. Wahid (d. 345/956) reedited the book and added certain supplementary traditions to it.<sup>70</sup> Al-Bawarti, the lexicographer (d. 499/1155), based his *Gharib al-Hadith* entirely on this book.<sup>71</sup> 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir (d. 630/1234) used it as one of his sources for his biographical dictionary, the *Usd al-Ghaba*.<sup>72</sup> Ibn Hajar (d. 852/1505) included it among the important works of which he prepared the *Atraf*.<sup>73</sup> Siraj al-Din 'Umar b. Mulaqqin (d. 805/1402) made a synopsis of it. Al-Suyuti (d. 911/1505) based upon it his grammatical treatise, *'Uqud al-Zabarjad*.<sup>74</sup> Abu al-Hasan 'Umar b. al-Hadi al-Sindi (d. 1139/1726) wrote an extensive commentary on it. Zayn al-Din 'Umar b. Ahmad al-Shamma al-Halabi made an epitome of it, which he called *al-Muntaqa min Musnad Ahmad*.<sup>75</sup> Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Ahd Allah reedited it, arranging the traditions in the alphabetical order of the names of their original *Rawis*.<sup>76</sup> Nasir al-Din b. Zurayq prepared another edition of it in the form of a *Musannaf*; and Abu al-Hasan al-Haythami compiled together such of the traditions contained in it as were not found in the six canonical collections.<sup>77</sup>

The *Musnad* did not only serve as a treasure house of material for Muslim theology and Arabic lexicography, but also gathered a halo of sanctity around itself, because of the pious personality of its compiler. This is shown by the fact that, in the twelfth century, a society of pious Traditionists read it from beginning to end in 56 sittings before the tomb of the Prophet in Madinah.<sup>78</sup>

It appears, however, that on account of its large bulk and because of the compilation of many better planned and more practical works in *Hadith* literature during the third and the fourth centuries of the Hijra, the *Musnad* of Ahmad grew less and less popular, and its copies became more and more scarce as early as the middle of the fourth century of the Hijra. Al-Muzani, one of the leading Traditionists of the time, was surprised to learn from one of the students of

*Hadith* that he had read 150 parts of the book with Abu Bakr b. Malik. Muzani recalled that when he himself was a student in Mesopotamia, they used to be surprised to find even one part of the *Musnad* with any of the Traditionists.<sup>79</sup> The scarcity of its manuscripts in modern times, therefore, is (as Goldziher has pointed out) not a matter of surprise.

Like Ahmad b. Hanbal and Abu Da'ud al-Tayalisi, many other Traditionists also compiled *Musnad* works on the same lines, with certain differences in the details of arrangement. These include Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Hamid b. Humayd (d. 249/863), Abu Usama (d. 280/893), Ibn Abi Shayba (d. 235/849), Ibn Rahawayh (d. 238/852), and others.<sup>80</sup>

### THE MUSANNAF WORKS

More important than the *Musnad* works are the *Musannaf* works in *Hadith* literature. To this branch belong the most important works on the subject, e.g. the *Sahihs* of al-Bukhari and Muslim, the *fami* of al-Tirmidhi, and the *Sunan* works like those of Nasa'i, Abu Da'ud and others. The *Musannafs*, as we have seen, may be either *fami*'...like the *Sahih* of al-Abu Da'ud Sijistani, Nasa'i and others.

The early *Musannaf* works are almost entirely lost. The *Musannaf* of Waki' is known to us only through references made to it in later works.<sup>81</sup> The earliest *Musannaf* works, of which incomplete manuscripts are still extant, is the *Musannaf* of Abu Bakr 'Abd al-Razzaq b. Human (126/211/743-826) of San'a in Arabia.<sup>82</sup>

'Abd al-Razzaq began the study of *Hadith* at the age of 20, kept the company of Ma'mar for 7 years, and learnt *Hadith* from him and ibn Jurayj and other leading Traditionists of the day. He became one of the important masters of the traditions of his own time. Many of the recognized authorities of a later date sat at his feet and acquired knowledge from him. Traditionists like Yahya b. Ma'in and Ahmad b. Hanbal related traditions handed down by him. It is said that after the death of the Prophet, people never travelled in such large

numbers to meet anyone as they did to meet 'Abd al-Razzaq.<sup>83</sup> He has been declared as unreliable by some critics, but there were others who considered him trustworthy.<sup>84</sup>

Two of his works are mentioned by Ibn al-Nadim.<sup>85</sup> One of them, the *Kitab al-Sunan*, is identical with what is generally known as the *Musannaf*.<sup>86</sup> Haji Khalifa has mentioned his other works also.<sup>87</sup> His *Musannaf*, however, is divided, like books of *Fiqh*, into a number of books in which various traditions are arranged according to their contents. The last chapter of this work is entitled *Shama'il*, and the last tradition is about the Prophet's hair.<sup>88</sup> More exhaustive than this *Musannaf*, however, is that of Abu Bakr Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Abi Shayba (d. 235/849). His grandfather worked as a judge of Wasit during the reign of Mansur, and his family produced many traditionists.<sup>89</sup> He himself had the credit of relating traditions to prominent Traditionists like Abu Zar'a, al-Bukhari, Muslim and Ahmad b. Hanbal (who is said to have declared him unreliable).<sup>90</sup>

#### SAHIH AL-BUKHARI

The most important of not only all the *Musannafs* but of all the works in *Hadith* literature is the *al-fami' al-Sahih* of al-Bukhari, who interrogated more than 1000 masters of *Hadith* living in places as distant from one another as Balkh, Merv, Nishapur, the Hijaz, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Al-Bukhari sought the aid of prayers before recording traditions, and weighed every word that he wrote with scrupulous exactitude. He devoted more than one-fourth of his life to the actual compilation his work, and at the end produced his epoch-making book, which is accepted by most of the Traditionists as the most authentic work in *Hadith* literature, and which is considered by Muslims in general as an authority next only to the Qur'an.

Al-Bukhari, whose full name is Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari, was of Persian origin. He was born at Bukhara in the year 194/810.<sup>91</sup> His ancestor,

Bardizbah, was a cultivator in the vicinity of Bukhara, where he was made a slave at the time of the Muslim conquest. Mughira, the son of Bardizbah, accepted Islam at the hand of al-Yaman al-Ju'fi, the Muslim governor of Bukhara; thus he gained his freedom as well as his *nisba* as al-Ju'fi. About his son, Ibrahim (the grandfather of our author), we have received no information. But Ibrahim's son, Ismail (the father of our author), was a Traditionist of great piety and sound reputation. He is said to have boasted at his death that in all that he possessed there was not a penny that had not been earned by honest labour.<sup>92</sup>

Isma'il died leaving a considerable fortune to his widow and two sons, Ahmad and Muhammad, the latter being only an infant at the time of his death. This infant child who was destined to play an important part in the development of *Hadith* literature was endowed by nature with strong intellectual powers, although he was of weak physique. He possessed a sharp and retentive memory, great intelligence, and tenacity of purpose. He had inexhaustible energy and a great capacity for hard, methodical work.

Al-Bukhari began his educational career under the guidance of his mother in his native town, Bukhara. Having finished his elementary studies at the early age of eleven, he took to the study of Hadith. Within six years he mastered the knowledge of all the Traditionists of his native city as well as that contained in the then available works on the subject. Then he went to Mecca with his mother and brother in order to perform the Pilgrimage. From there he started on his journeys in search of *Hadith*. His travels took him through a large part of the Muslim world; and he visited all the important centres of Islamic learning, staying everywhere as long as his pursuit of *Hadith* demanded, meeting the Traditionists, learning from them all the *Ahadith* they had related, and communicating to them his own knowledge. He did not hesitate to stay at one and the same place for many years. Nor did he hesitate to undertake more than one journey to a place, if it was demanded by his



literary pursuit. He stayed at Basra for four or five years, and in al-Hijaz for six years; and he travelled to Egypt twice, and to Kufa and Baghdad times out of number.<sup>93</sup>

Al-Bukhari's *Wanderjahre* continued for about 40 years. In the year 250/864 he came to Nishapur, which gave him a grand reception suitable to a Traditionist of established reputation and authority. Here he devoted himself to the teaching of traditions, and wanted to settle down. But he had to leave the town on account of the rivalry of Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli, at the command of Kahalid b. Ahmad al-Dhuhli, whose request to deliver lectures on *Hadith* in his palace was not accepted by al-Bukhari. From Nishapur he went to Khartank, a place near Samarqand, at the request of its inhabitants. Here he settled down, and died in the year 256/870.

Throughout his life, al-Bukhari's character was consistent, honest and amiable, which might serve as an example to the devotees of learning. He was extremely strict in the observance of his religious duties. He always lived on what he earned by means of trade, in which he was scrupulously honest. Once he lost 10,000 dirhams on account of mere scruple. He spent a good deal of his own money in helping students and the poor. He never vented his anger upon anyone, even when there was sufficient cause for it; nor did he bear ill-will against anybody. Even against Muhammad b. Yahya, who had caused his exile from Nishapur, he did not harbour any grudge.<sup>94</sup>

*Hadith* was al-Bukhari's only interest. For it he spared no pains, and for it he sacrificed almost everything. On it he spend almost all that he earned. To it he devoted his whole life. On account of it he spent the largest part of his life in travelling, and on one of his travels, lived on grass and herbs for three days. The only recreation he enjoyed was archery, in which he had acquired great skill. His amanuensis, who lived with him for a considerable time, says that al-Bukhari often went out shooting arrows; only twice during

his stay with al-Bukhari did this man see him miss the mark.<sup>95</sup>

From the very beginning of his career, al-Bukhari showed signs of greatness as a Traditionist. He pointed out a mistake of one of his teachers when he was a mere boy of eleven. The teacher laughed at the audacity of the young student. But al-Bukhari persisted in his correction, and challenged his teacher to refer to his book, which justified the contention of al-Bukhari.<sup>96</sup> When he was still a boy without any visible signs of manhood, he was entreated by a large crowd of students of *Hadith* to deliver a lecture on the subject. The learned youth accepted their request. A large number of the seekers of *Hadith* flocked together in a mosque and they accepted the traditions related by him on his authority.<sup>97</sup> Once when he visited Basra, the people were notified of his arrival and a day was fixed for him to lecture. At this lecture he narrated only such traditions as he had received on the authority of the early Traditionists of this very centre of Islamic learning, but which were unknown to this audience.<sup>98</sup>

Many a time al-Bukhari's vast learning was severely tested in various ways. He was always remarkably successful at these difficult trials. At Baghdad ten of the Traditionists changed the *Isnads* and the contents of a hundred traditions, recited them to al-Bukhari at a public meeting, and asked him questions about them. Al-Bukhari confessed his ignorance about the traditions which they had recited. But then he narrated the correct versions of all those traditions, and said that probably his interrogators had wrongly recited what had been correctly reported by himself. At Samarqand four hundred students tested the knowledge of al-Bukhari as the people of Baghdad had done, for seven days; and al-Bukhari succeeded in exposing their interpolations. At Nishapur, Muslim, the well-known author of another *Sahih*, and others asked al-Bukhari questions about certain traditions; and he completely satisfied them with his answers. In many an assembly of the Traditionists, he successfully established the identity of some of the early narrators of traditions, which

they had been unable to do. These repeated trials and successes of al-Bukhari gained him recognition as the greatest Traditionist of his time, by all the great authorities on the subject with whom he came in contact, e.g., Ahmad b. Hanbal, 'Ali b. al-Madini, Abu Bakr b. Abi Shayba, Ishaq b. Rahawayh and others.<sup>99</sup>

Al-Bukhari began his career as an author when he was still a student. His long journeys and toilsome travels did not stand in his way to authorship. During his stay at Madinah, at the age of 18 he compiled his two earliest books. One of these contained the decrees and the decessions of the Companions and the Followers; and the other, short biographies of the important narrators of traditions during his own time.<sup>100</sup> A large number of other works followed. They are listed in the *Fihrist*, the *Muqaddimah* of *Fath al-Bari*, and the *Irshad al-Sari*.<sup>101</sup>

The most important of these works is the *Sahih* which is commonly known as *Sahih al-Bukhari*. It was read out to 90,000 students by the author himself, and it has made his name immortal. It is considered by almost all the Traditionists as the most reliable book in *Hadith* literature, and has been considered by the Muslims generally as an authority next only to the Qur'an. It is used by some Muslims as a charm to overcome their difficulties,<sup>102</sup> and the possession of its copy has been regarded as a proof against disaster.<sup>103</sup>

The *Sahih* may be called al-Bukhari's life-work. His earlier treatises served him as a preparation for the great work, and his later books were only off-shoots of it. It is to the *Sahih* that he devoted his greatest care and attention, and in the actual compilation of it, he spent about one fourth of his life.<sup>104</sup>

Al-Bukhari's idea to compile the *Sahih* owed its origin to the casual remark of Ishaq b. Rahawayh (166-238/782/852) that he wished some of the Traditionists would compile a short comprehensive book containing only genuine traditions. These words caught the imagination of al-Bukhari.

He began to work at this task with the greatest zeal, care and scruple ever shown by any author. He explored all the traditions known to him, tested their genuineness according to the canons of criticism promulgated by himself, selected 7275 out of 600,000 of them, arranged them according to their subject matter under separate headings generally taken from the Qur'an and, in some cases, from the traditions themselves.

Al-Bukhari has nowhere mentioned what canons of criticism he applied to the traditions in order to test their genuineness; nor has he told us what his aims were in compiling this book. But many Muslim doctors have tried to infer these things by an objective study of the book itself. Al-Hazimi, in his *Shurut al-A'imma*, al-'Iraqi, in his *Alfiya*, al-'Ayni and al-Qastallani in their introductions to their commentaries on the *Sahih*, and many other writers on the *'Ulum al-Hadith* (e.g. Ibn Salah) have tried to infer the principles followed by al-Bukhari in his selection of traditions.

As we have already seen, al-Bukhari's main object was to collect together the genuine traditions only. By these he<sup>105</sup> meant such traditions as were handed down to him from the Prophet on the authority of a well-known Companion by a continuous chain of such narrators as, according to his researches, had been unanimously accepted by honest and trustworthy Traditionists as men of integrity, possessing retentive memory and firm faith, provided their narrations were not contrary to what was related by the other reliable authorities, and were free from hidden defects. Al-Bukahri included in his book the accounts of these narrators, if they explicitly said that they had received the traditions from their authorities. In case their statements in this respect were ambiguous, he took care that they were proved to have met and associated with their authorities and were free from careless statement.<sup>106</sup>

Al-Bukhari's meticulousness may be judged from the above principles which guided him in his choice of sources

for the materials for his book. He employed his skill and care, however, more in connection with the principal contents of his work. About the traditions which he used as the headings of some of the chapters, and as corroboratives for the principal ones, he has very often omitted the whole or parts of their *Isnads*, and, in certain cases, has relied on weak authorities.<sup>107</sup> The number of the 'suspended' and 'corroborative' traditions in the book is about 1725.<sup>108</sup>

Al-Bukhari, however, wanted not only to collect together what he considered to be genuine traditions, but also to impress their import upon the minds of his readers, and to show them what legal inferences could be drawn from these traditions. He, therefore, divided the whole work into more than 100 books, which he subdivided into 3450 chapters. Every chapter has a heading which serves as a key to the contents of the various traditions included in it.

In the choice of his materials for the *Sahih*, on the whole al-Bukhari has shown his vast knowledge of traditions as well as of the lives, character, and authenticity of their narrators. By his choice of headings for the various chapters, he has shown his keen insight into the import of the traditions chosen by him, and his thorough grasp of the system of Islamic jurisprudence.

About the headings of the various chapters in the *Sahih*, it has been aptly remarked that they are, in essence, the *Fiqh* of al-Bukhari. These headings consist of verses from the Qur'an or of passages from traditions. In some cases they are in entire agreement with the traditions under them, so that they serve as mere indexes to them. In other instances, they are of wider or narrower significance than the traditions which follow, in which case they figure as additional objects of interpretation and explanations of the traditions. Sometimes they are in the interrogative form, an indication that al-Bukhari wanted to show that, according to him, the problem was still undecided. Often, he wanted to warn against what might outwardly appear as wrong and impermissible. In the headings of all the chapters a certain

object was kept in view by al-Bukhari. Wherever the headings are not followed by a tradition (a point which has baffled many Traditionists), al-Bukhari wanted to show that no genuine tradition on the subject was known to him.<sup>109</sup>

In the repetition of the various versions of one and the same tradition in different chapters al-Bukhari has again struck out on a new path. By repeating them at different places instead of putting them together at one and the same place, he wanted to bring to light further evidence of the authenticity of the traditions (in question), and at the same time to draw more than one practical conclusion from them. Similarly, in including a part of a tradition in one chapter and inserting another part in another chapter, and in introducing the 'suspended' traditions as *Marfu'* and *Mawquf*, al-Bukhari has certain special, and scientific purposes in view, the importance of which is explained by the commentators of the *Sahih* in their commentaries.<sup>110</sup>

Thus, the *Sahih*—having been compiled by a great Traditionist, who combined a vast knowledge of traditions and allied subjects with scrupulous piety, strict exactitude, the painstaking accuracy of a modern editor, gained the attention and respect of the whole Muslim world, and was recognized as an authority next only to the Qur'an. Many Muslim doctors wrote lengthy commentaries on it, in which they thoroughly discussed every aspect of the book and every word of its contents. A long list of these works is to be found in the *Irshad al-Sari* of al-Qastallani<sup>111</sup> and the *Kashf al-Zunun* of Haji Khalifa.<sup>112</sup>

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the *Sahih* has no defects, or that the Muslim scholars have failed to criticise it. Thus, it is generally admitted that, like other Traditionists, al-Bukhari has confined his criticism to the narrators of traditions and their reliability, and that he has paid no attention to the probability or possibility of the truth of the matters reported by them. In estimating the reliability of the narrators, his judgment has in certain cases been erroneous. The Muslim Traditionists did not fail to point out

these defects of the *Sahih*. Al-Daraqutni (306-385 A.H.) has tried to show the weakness of 200 traditions contained in the book (as well as that of many of their narrators) in his *al-Istidrak w'al-Tatabbu'*<sup>113</sup> which has been summarized by al-Jaza'iri in his *Taujih al-Nazar*.<sup>114</sup> Abu Mas'ud of Damascus and Abut 'Ali al-Ghassani have also criticised the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari,<sup>115</sup> and al-'Ayni in his commentary has shown the defects of some of its contents.<sup>116</sup>

But all the Muslim Traditionists, including the critics of the *Sahih* and the modern Orientalists, have unanimously paid tribute to the general accuracy, scrupulous care and exactitude of the author of the book. "In his selections of *Ahadith*," says Brockelmann, "he has shown the greatest critical ability, and in editing the text he has sought to obtain the most scrupulous accuracy."<sup>117</sup>

#### THE SAHIH OF MUSLIM

The position of the *Sahih al-Bukhari* in *Hadith* literature is not unrivalled. Another *Sahih* was compiled almost simultaneously with it, and it was considered superior to the *Sahih al-Bukhari* by some, equal to it by many, and next to it by most of the Traditionists. It is the *Sahih* of Abut al-Husain 'Asakir al-Din Muslim b. Hajjaj b. Muslim al-Qushayri al-Nishapuri.

Muslim, as his *nisba* shows, belonged to the Qushayri tribe of the Arabs, and off-shoot of the great clan of Rabi'a. His tribe played a more or less important part in the history of Islam after the death of the Prophet. Hayda, a Qushayri, is mentioned in the *Isaba* as one of the Companions.<sup>118</sup> Qurra b. Hubayra, another Qushayri, was made by the Prophet a *Wali* in charge of the alms of his people.<sup>119</sup> Ziyad b. 'Abd al-Rahman, another Qushayri, is said to have killed 1000 non-Muslims at the battle of Yarmuk, in which he lost one of his legs.<sup>120</sup>

After the vast Islamic conquest, various families of the Qushayris together with the members of the other tribes migrated from Arabia and settled down in the various

provinces, some in the west, and some in the east. Kulthum b. 'Iyad and his nephew Balj b. Bishr, who had served respectively as governors of Africa and of Andalusia, settled down in a district near Cordova in Spain. Another Qushayri family took up residence at Elvira. Some of them migrated to the East and settled down in Khurasan. Among them was one Zurara who served for some time as a governor of the province. His son 'Amr and grandson Humayd b. 'Amr settled down at Nishapur.<sup>121</sup> From them was probaly descended our author, Muslim, the son of al-Hajjaj, who was a Traditionist of no mean merit.<sup>122</sup>

Very little is known about the early life of Muslim. It is said, however, that he was born in 202/817, and that having excelled in the various branches of Arabic literature which he studied at an early age, he took to the special study of *Hadith*. In the pursuit of this subject he travelled widely, and visited all the important centres of learning in Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Egypt. He attended the lectures of most of the important Traditionists of his time, e.g. Ishaq b. Rahawayh, Ahmad b. Hanbal, 'Ubayd Allah al-Qawariri, Shuwayh b. Yunus, 'Abd Allah b. Maslama, Hamala b. Yahya and others.

Having finished his studies, he settled down at Nishapur, earned his livelihood by means of trade, and devoted his life to the service of *Hadith*. He died in the year 261/874 on account of taking too much *Baladhur* (Anacardia), while he was busy investigating a particular tradition.

Muslim's character is said to have been admirable. His fearless adherence to the truth is shown by his persistence in his association with al-Bukhari, while all others had deserted the latter on account of the feat of Muhammad b. Yahya al-Dhuhli.<sup>123</sup> Muslim never spoke ill of anyone; nor did he abuse anyone during his whole life.<sup>124</sup>

Like al-Bukhari, Muslim also devoted his whole life to the service of *Hadith*. He wrote many books and treatises on *Hadith* and on subjects allied to it. Ibn al-Nadim has



mentioned five of his books on biography and *Hadith*.<sup>125</sup> Haji Khalifa has added the names of many other works by him on the same subject.<sup>126</sup>

The most important of these works is his *Sahih* which has been regarded in certain respects as the best work on the subject. In order to compile this book, Muslim examined 300,000 traditions<sup>127</sup> out of which he selected only 4000, about the genuineness of which the Traditionists were unanimous; and included them in his *Sahih*.<sup>128</sup>

Muslim considered only such traditions as genuine, as had been handed down to him by a continuous chain of reliable authorities, were in conformity with what had been related by narrators whose reliability was unanimously accepted, and were free from hidden defects.<sup>129</sup> He classified traditions into three groups :—

1. Those related by such narrators as had been straightforward and steadfast in their accounts, without differing much from other reliable narrators, or allowing any obvious confusion to enter into their narrations;
2. traditions related by narrators who were not distinguished for their retentive memory and steadfastness in narrations;
3. traditions related by such narrators as were declared by the Traditionists in general, or by most of them, to be of questionable reliability.

The first group, says Muslim, form the principal part of the contents of his book; the second group are included as corroborative of the first group, and the third are entirely rejected.<sup>130</sup>

The book on Tafsir in Muslim's *Sahih* is neither complete nor systematic. Hence it is not considered as a *fami'* like that of al-Bukhari. But Muslim strictly observed many principles of the science of *Hadith*, which had been neglected by his great predecessor, al-Bukhari. He differentiated between the use of the terms *Akhbarana* and *Haddathana*, and always used

the former in connection with the traditions which had been recited to him by his teachers, and the latter in connection with what he had read out to them. He was stricter and more consistent than al-Bukhari in pointing out the differences between the narrations of the various *Rawis* and in making assertion about their character and other particulars. He showed greater acumen than his predecessor in the arrangement of traditions and their *Isnads* in his work, and in the putting together of the different versions of a tradition in one place.<sup>131</sup> He did not make any mistakes or allow any confusion to enter into the text or *Isnad* of any tradition, as his predecessor had done.<sup>132</sup> He added to his book a long introduction in which he explained some of the principles which he had followed in the choice of the materials for his book, and which he considered should be followed in accepting and relating traditions.

Having compiled the *Sahih*, Muslim presented it to Abut Zar'a of Ray, a Traditionist of great repute, for criticism. He deleted all that was pointed out (by Abu Zar'a) to him to be defective, and retained only such traditions as were declared by him to be genuine.<sup>133</sup>

Carefully compiled by Muslim, and corrected by Abu Zar'a, the *Sahih* has been recognized as the most authentic collection of traditions after that of al-Bukhari, and superior to the latter in the details of its arrangement. Some Traditionists held it to be superior to the work of al-Bukhari in every respect. But Muslim himself had recognized the superiority of his predecessor. Nevertheless, his claim that his book would be the basis for future works on traditions for the next 200 years proved to be correct.<sup>134</sup>

After Muslim, some other Traditionists also compiled 'genuine' traditions. These include Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923), Abu Hatim Muhammad Ibn Hibban (d. 354/965),<sup>135</sup> etc. None of them, however, ever gained the recognition and popularity which had been enjoyed by the works of al-Bukhari and Muslim.

## Notes

1. MSt, ii, 8-11.
2. TsC, vol. i, p. 536.
3. MSt, ii, 204-205; JASB, xxv, p. 375.
4. FN, p. 89.
5. LHA, p. 13. It is surprising that Margoliouth does not mention even the name of this author in ArH.
6. FN, p. 90.
7. *Ibid.* For the Arabic medical works of this period see, SAP.
8. IsC, i, P. 536-39.
9. *Ibid.*
10. TIS, v, p. 133.
11. KZ, v, pp. 535-36.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 540-41. Also see illustration No. 1.
13. JASB, xx, pp. 391-488, A.H. Harley, "The Musnad of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz", intro.
14. MAT, title page.
15. KZ, v, p. 533.
16. OPG, v, 1, pp. 157-62.
17. TT, iv, No. 316; TdH, i, p. 322.
18. MAT, pp. 20-21.
19. KZ, v, p. 533; cf. FM, 34.
20. For all the parts of the book have been passed on his common authority.
21. MAT, Nos. 77, 241, 263, 287, 484, 1060, 1158, 2179, etc.
22. *Ibid.*, Nos. 1021 etc.
23. *Ibid.*, Nos. 393, 644, 837, 886, 892, 917, 938, etc.
24. *Ibid.*, Nos. 381, etc.
25. *Ibid.*, Nos. 456, 718, 2254, etc.
26. *Ibid.*, Nos. 519, 1539, etc.
27. *Ibid.*, Nos. 794, etc.
28. OPC, v, 1, pp. 157-62.
29. Two later editions of this voluminous book have been published in Egypt: one by al-Banna, and the other by Shakir. The former has not been available to me. But the latter edition (Egypt, vols. 1-16, 1954/1373) is most scholarly in which the learned editor has taken great pains to put together all the available material (with regard to the life of the author) from various sources. Shakir has given the number of each *Hadith*, and has added at the end of each volume several highly useful indices. Unfortunately, this editor passed away after he had published only 16 volumes. His death is a great loss to the world of scholarship.
30. JA, 320. These references are to my own Ms. of the book. Its printed edition has not been available to me.
31. *Ibid.*
32. JA, 321; ATb, ii, p. 1358.
33. AT, p. 335.
34. AHM, p. 10.
35. TT, i, No. 126; Sh, No. 13.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, loc. cit.
38. TK, i, p. 203; AHM, p. 108, 112, 145.
39. AHM, p. 142.
40. TK, i, pp. 203-204; AHM, p. 172.
41. AHM, p. 14, 141, 147, etc.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

44. AHM, p. 152.
45. TT, i, No. 1261; TA, 142-45.
46. AHM, 194.
47. FN, 229.
48. TK, i, 202.
49. *Ibid*, 203.
50. MAH, i, 308; iv, 269.
51. FN, 229. But according to Ibn al-Nadim, the *Musnad* contains more than 40,000 traditions.
52. TK, i, 202; ZDMG, L, 472 fn.
53. BM, 31.
54. ZDMG, L, 485-86, *et al*.
55. MAH, ii, 252-53.
56. *Ibid*, iii, p. 202.
57. *Ibid*, vi, p. 101.
58. *Ibid*, iii, p. 201.
59. *Ibid*, i, p. 308; iii, 33; v, 352, 385.
60. *Ibid*, ii, 184; vi, 420.
61. He says in his notes in connection with some traditions that he read it with his father (MAH, ii, 157). In connection with some of them, he says that he found them in the manuscript of his father (iii, 310; *op. cit.*) In connection with some of them, he says that he found it in the manuscript and also had heard it from his father, but had not made a note of it. (iv, 96).
62. MAH, iii, 182; iv, 96; v, 26.
63. *Ibid*, i, 252; ii, 449; iii, 3; iv, 225; v, 382; vi, 73.
64. *Ibid*, v, p. 358.
65. *Ibid*, p. 336.
66. *Ibid*, v, 326; vi, 326.
67. *Ibid*, iv, p. 91.
68. BM, p. 31.
69. ZDMG, L, 466.
70. KZ, v, 534-35.
71. MUd, vii, p. 29.
72. See UGh, i, 9-11.
73. TH, xxiv, No. 12.
74. KZ, v, p. 535.
75. KZ, v, pp. 534-35.
76. ZDMGM L, p. 470.
77. BM, pp. 31-32.
78. Els, "Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal"
79. ZDMG, L, p. 467.
80. KZ, v, pp. 532-543.
81. MAH, i, 308. It is probably identical with the *Sunan* of Waki' (d. 197/812) which is mentioned by Ibn Nadim (FN, 226).
82. MFB, p. 489.
83. WA, No. p. 409.
84. MIt.
85. FN, p. 228.
86. KZ, iii, p. 629.
87. *Ibid*, ii, p. 369, 580; v, 88.
88. BM, p. 51.
89. KAS, p. 355b.
90. MIt, "Abd Allah b. Muhammad".
91. A detailed account of the life and work of al-Bukhari is found in TA, TK, MFB, IS, and Sh.

92. IS, i, p. 36.
93. MFB, p. 564.
94. IS, i, p. 44f.
95. MFB, p. 566.
96. TK, ii, p. 4.
97. TA, p. 90.
98. TK, ii, p. 6.
99. IS, i, 33ff.; MFB 568ff. TA, p. 87-91.
100. T.K, ii, p. 5.
101. FN, 230; MFB, p. 493; IS, 35.
102. IS, i, 33, ff., p. 46.
103. TL, p. 93.
104. TA, p. 95; TR, 24.
105. For a detailed discussion of the term 'genuine' see IS, i, 22ff.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*
108. TR, p. 30.
109. MFB, p. 13; IS, i, 11-12.
110. MFB, p. 12 f.; IS, i, 22f.
111. IS, i, pp. 39-42.
112. KZ, ii, pp. 521-39, *et al.*
113. KZ, ii, p. 545.
114. TN, pp. 96-113.
115. NSM, p. 8.
116. Dr. A Mingana published a note on an MS of the oldest fragments of the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari in J.R.A.S., 1936 (pp. 287-292). In it he has described the special features of the MS and promised to publish a complete set of facsimiles of it, which has not been available to me. His suggestion, however, that the book was not composed by al-Bukhari, but by a student of the book one or two generations after al-Bukhari, because the word "*Akhbarana*" is used for him and "*Haddathana*" for the later narrators, is not warranted. For the strict use of these terms was not definitely fixed at the time of al-Bukhari and also because in the *Risala* of *Taqyid al-'ilm* of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi which was also certainly composed by al-Khatib, the author is introduced by the term "*Akhbarana*" and other narrators by the term "*Haddathana*."
117. EIS, "Bukhari"
118. ITS, i, 752.
119. JA, fol. 288.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. TT, x, No. 226.
123. WA, No. 727.
124. BM, 117.
125. Fn. 231.
126. KZ, ii, 54ff. cf. NSM, 4.
127. NSM, p. 5.
128. MIS, pp. 8-9.
129. NSM, p. 5.
130. SM, Muqaddimah, 3ff.
131. NSM, p. 5.
132. BM, p. 117.
133. NSM, p. 8.
134. *Ibid*, p. 5.
135. *Ibid*, p. 8.

## CHAPTER 5

### ***Hadith Literature—Contd.***

#### THE SUNAN WORKS

The *Sunan* works constitute the richest branch of *Hadith* literature. Since the earliest period in the history of Islam, Traditionists have attached more importance to legal and dogmatical traditions (*Ahadith al-ahkam*) than to historical traditions (*maghazi*). According to them, the *maghazi* were of no practical value. Whether the Prophet left Badr on the 8th of January 623 A.D. or on the 28th of March is of no practical utility to a Muslim. They believed, on the contrary, that the method followed by him in his ablutions, prayers and pilgrimage, or in his buying and selling things, and his commands about a marriage or the manumission of slaves, etc. should form the basis of every Muslim's practical life.

By and by, the Traditionists confined their activities more and more to the study and compilation of the legal traditions only. According to them, the *Maghazi* constitute a part of the history of Islam, and properly belong to that sphere. From the second half of the third century, therefore, most of the Traditionists, except for the most ambitious ones, compiled only *Sunan* works, some of which are included among the most important works in *Hadith* literature. Such are the works of Abu Da'ud al-Sijistani, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i, al-Darimi, Ibn Maja, al-Daraqutni, and others. The book of al-Tirmidhi is really a *Jami'* and includes traditions on all the various subjects; but, as it is generally called a *Sunan*, it will be discussed in this chapter together with the works of the other authors mentioned above.

## THE SUNAN OF ABU DA'UD AL-SIJISTANI

One of the most important of the *Sunan* works is that of Abu Da'ud Sulayman b. al-Ash'ath, who examined 500,000 traditions, and picked out 4,800 of them for his book, on which he laboured for 20 years.<sup>1</sup>

Abu Da'ud, was a descendant of 'Imran, from the tribe of Banu Azd of Arabia, who was killed in the battle of Siffin while fighting on behalf of a'Ali.<sup>2</sup> Abu Da'ud himself was born in 203/817. Authorities differ about the place of his birth. Ibn Khallikan<sup>3</sup> and, following him, Wustenfeld<sup>4</sup>, are of the opinion that he was born in a village called Sijistana near Basra. But Yaqut, the great geographer,<sup>5</sup> and al-Sam'ani<sup>6</sup> and al-Subki<sup>7</sup> are of the opinion that our author was born in the well-known town of Sijistan in Khurasan. As a matter of fact, a village named Sijistana was never known to have existed near Basra.

Abu Da'ud received his elementary education probably in his native city. When he was ten years of age, he joined a school in Nishapur. There he studied with Muhammad b. Aslam<sup>8</sup> (d. 242/856). He also studied at Khurasan before going to Basra<sup>9</sup>, where he received the largest part of his education in *Hadith*. He visited Kufa in 224, and from there he started on his journeys in search of 'knowledge' in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia, Syria and Egypt. He met all the important Traditionists of his time, from whom he gathered knowledge of all the available traditions. The names of many of these teachers are found in works on *Asma' al-Rijal*.

During his travels, Abu Da'ud visited Baghdad on many occasions. Once, while staying there, he was visited by Abu Ahmad al-Muwaffaq, the famous commander and brother of the caliph al-Mu'tamid. When Abu Da'ud enquired about the object of his visit, al-Muwaffaq said that it was threefold: (i) to request Abu Da'ud to take up residence at Basra, which had been deserted by people on account of the insurrection of the Zanjis; this would attract crowds of students and would lead to an increase in population if Abu Da'ud took

up residence there; (ii) to request Abu Da'ud to deliver lectures on traditions to al-Muwaffaq's sons; and (iii) to ask Abu Da'ud to hold special classes for this purpose, to which the common students might not be admitted. Abu Da'ud acceded to the first two requests, but expressed his inability to accede to the third. For "to knowledge all are equal", and Abu Da'ud would not make any distinction between poor and rich students. The sons of al-Muwaffaq, therefore, attended (according to the report of Jabir) the lectures of Abu Da'ud together with the other students.<sup>10</sup>

This story, related by al-Subki, throws light not only on the great reputation enjoyed by Abu Da'ud as a Traditionist and on his character as a teacher, but also on the date of his final settlement at Basra. This could not have happened before the year 270, when the Zanj insurrection was finally crushed. Abu Da'ud died at Basra in the year 275/888 at the age of 73.

Abu Da'ud's vast knowledge of traditions, his upright character and his piety have been generally recognized by all the Traditionists.<sup>11</sup>

Abu Da'ud wrote many books on traditions and Islamic law.<sup>12</sup> The most important of them is the *Sunan*. Taken to be the first book of its type in *Hadith* literature, it has been recognized as the best *Sunan* work, and has been included in the most reliable collections of *Hadith*. It has been divided into various books, which are subdivided into different chapters.

Abu Da'ud kept up the scrupulous exactitude of his predecessors in reproducing the traditions which he had collected. But he differed from them in the standard of his choice. He included in his *Sunan* not only the 'genuine' traditions (as al-Bukhari and Muslim had done), but also such of them as had been pronounced by some traditionists to be weak and doubtful. Among the narrators he relied not only on those who had been declared by all the authorities unanimously as acceptable, but also on those who had been



accepted only by some critics as reliable. For some of the critics like Shu'ba and others had been over-strict in their criticism of the narrators.<sup>13</sup> Abu Da'ud, however, collected the most reliable traditions known to him on the subject in every chapter. He gave the various sources through which he had received traditions, and also set down the different versions of the various traditions. He pointed out the flaws in the defective traditions as well as the relative value of different versions of them. In the case of the traditions which he believed to be genuine, however, he made no remarks whatsoever. Of the long traditions he has given only such parts as were relevant to the chapter in which they are included<sup>14</sup>.

The following remarks made by Abu Da'ud in connection with some of the traditions give us a general idea of the method and of the nature of his criticism :

"Abu Da'ud says : This is an inauthentic (*munkar*) *Hadith*. Certainly, it is related by Ibn Jurayj from Ziyad b. Sa'd, from al Zuhri, from Anas, that he said that the Prophet (may peace be on him) had put on a ring made of (palm) leaf, which after some time he threw away. The mistake in the *Hadith* is due to Humam. No other narrator has related it."<sup>15</sup>

About another *Hadith* he says :

"It has been related by Ibn Wahb only. A similar *Hadith* has, however, been related by Mu'qil b. 'Ubayd Allah through a chain of narrators."<sup>16</sup>

In connection with another *Hadith*, after giving two versions of it, he says :

"The one related by Anas is more correct than the other."<sup>17</sup>

At another place, he points out that only the Traditionists of Egypt have given an *Isnad* for it.<sup>18</sup> In connection with another *Hadith*, he adds a note about one of its narrators, Abu Ishaq, that he had learnt only four traditions from al-Harith, and that the present *Hadith* related by him on the

authority of al-Harīth was not one of them.<sup>19</sup> About the narrators of another *Hadith* he says :

"Abu Khalid never heard any *Hadith* from Qatada."<sup>20</sup> In connection with another *Hadith* he says :

"This *Hadith* has been handed down by several chains of authorities. All of them are inauthentic."<sup>21</sup>

About another *Hadith* he says :

"This *Hadith* has continuous chains of authorities."<sup>22</sup>

Containing all the legal traditions which may serve as a foundation for Islamic rituals and law, and explicit on the value and reliability of those traditions, Abu Da'ud's book has generally been accepted as the most important *Sunan* work. "The *Kitab al-Sunan* of Abu Da'ud," says al-Khattabi, "is a noble book. No book like it has ever been written on theology." Abu Da'ud collected in this book such traditions as no one before or after him ever compiled. It has been accepted, therefore, as a standard work on traditions by theologians of various schools in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Maghrib and in many other parts of the world — in spite of their following different schools of Islamic law.<sup>23</sup>

### THE JAMI' OF AL-TIRMIDHI

The general principles with regard to the criticisms of *Hadith* which had been adopted by Abu Da'ud in his collection of *Sunan* were further improved upon and followed by his student, Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa in his *Jami'*. This latter work contains all such traditions—legal, dogmatical and historical—as had been accepted by the Muslim jurists of one school or another, as the basis of Islamic law.

Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa was born at Mecca in the year 206/821. He travelled a good deal in order to acquire learning in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia and Khurasan, and associated with the eminent Traditionists of his time, e.g. al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Da'ud and others. He died at Tirmidh in 279/892.

Abu 'Isa possessed an extremely sharp and retentive memory which was severely tested many times. It is related that once during his travels, a Traditionist dictated to him several traditions which occupied 16 pages. These pages were lost by al-Tirmidhi before he could revise them. He met the Traditionist again after some time, and requested him to recite some traditions. The teacher suggested that he would read out from his manuscript the same traditions as he had dictated to al-Tirmidhi at the previous meeting, and that al-Tirmidhi should compare his notes with what he heard. Al-Tirmidhi, instead of telling the teacher that he had lost his notes, took up some blank papers in his hand, and looked into them as if they contained his notes. The teacher began to read from his book, but soon discovered the trick, and became angry at the young student's conduct. But al-Tirmidhi explained the position, and said that he remembered every word of what had been dictated to him. The teacher, refusing to believe him, challenged him to recite the traditions from memory. Al-Tirmidhi accepted the challenge at once, and recited all the traditions without committing a single mistake. Now the teacher doubted his statement that he had not revised his notes. In order to test this, he recited forty other traditions, and asked al-Tirmidhi to reproduce them. Al-Tirmidhi at once repeated what he had heard from his teacher who, finally convinced of the truth of his statement, was impressed by his unfailing memory.

Al-Tirmidhi's character is said to have been excellent; his piety and fear of God was unsurpassed.

Tirmidhi's *Jami'* has been recognized as one of the most important works in *Hadith* literature, and has been unanimously included in the six canonical collections of *Hadith*. The author of this great *Jami'* for the first time, took into consideration only those traditions on which the various rituals and laws of Islam had already been based by the Muslim doctors of the various schools. He took pains to determine the identity, the names, the titles and the *kunya* of the narrators of these traditions. He tried to fix the degree

of the reliability of traditions, and explained what use had been made of them by the jurists of the various schools of Islamic law.<sup>24</sup> As a matter of fact, al-Tirmidhi adds a note to almost every *Hadith* with the words: "Abu Isa says". Then he states various important and interesting points connected with the tradition. The following examples will show the nature and the importance of al-Tirmidhi's notes:—

1. . "It was related to us by Abu Kurayb who repeated what Muhammad b. 'Amr and Abu Hurayra had told respectively to Abda b. Sulayman and Abu Salma about how the Prophet (May peace be upon him) said that, but for fear of causing hardship to his people, he would have ordered them to rub their teeth with a brush at the time of every prayer. Abu 'Isa says : Truly, this *Hadith* has been related by Muhammad b. Ishaq, it having come down to him from the Prophet through Zayd b. Khalid, Abu Salma and Uhammad b. Ibrahim, each one being a link in the Chain of communication. And to me, both the traditions related by Abu Salma, as handed down by Abu Hurayra and Zayd b. Khalid from the Prophet are genuine, because they have been related through more than one chain of authorities, starting with Abu Hurayra, who was in direct contact with the Prophet. But Muhammad thinks that the tradition related by Abu Salma, as told to him by Zayd b. Khalid, is more correct. On this subject, there are traditions related by Abu Bakr Siddiq, 'Ali, 'A'ishah, Khalid, Anas, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr, Umm Habiba and Ibn 'Umar".<sup>25</sup>

2. "Qutayba and Hannad and Abu Kurayb and Ahmad b. Mani' and Mahmud b. Ghaylan and Abu 'Ammar have told us that Waki' had it from A 'mash, from Habib b. Abi Thabit, from 'Urwa, and from 'A'isha that the Prophet (Peace be on him) kissed some of his wives and then went out to offer Prayers without performing ablutions. 'Urwa said to 'A'ishah: 'Who could this be but yourself?' 'A'ishah laughed. Abu isa says: A similar tradition has been related by many of those who possessed knowledge among the Companions and the Followers, and this is the opinion of Sufyan al-Thauri and

the Jurists of Kufa. They say that a kiss does not vitiate the ablutions. And Malik b. Anas and al-Auza'i and Shafi and Ahmad (b. Hanbal) and Ishaq (b. Rahawayh) say that a kiss cancels the ablutions, which is the opinion of many of those who possessed knowledge among the Companions and the Followers. Truly, our people (i.e. Malik, Ahmad, etc.) did not follow the tradition related by 'A'ishah concerning the Prophet (Peace be on him), because it did not appear to be genuine to them on account of its *Isnad*. I heard Abu Bakr al-'Attar of Basara quote 'Ali b. al-Madini, who said that Yahya b. Sa'id al-Qattan declared this tradition to be weak and said that it was 'like nothing (i.e. extremely weak). I heard Muhammad b. Isma'il also call it a weak tradition, saying that Habib b. Abi Thabit never received any tradition from 'Urwa. Ibrahim al-Taymi also related on the authority of 'A'ishah that the Prophet (Peace be on him) kissed her and did not perform ablutions afterwards. But this also is not genuine, because Ibrahim al-Taymi is not known to have received this tradition from 'A'ishah. As a matter of fact, nothing that has been passed on as concerning the Prophet on this subject can be called 'genuine'."26

3. "Ahmad b. Muhammad told us that Abu al-Qasim (i.e. the Prophet), the Prophet of Forgiveness (Peace be on him), said that he who accused his slave falsely, while in fact the slave was innocent of what had been said about him, would be punished on the Day of Judgment—unless it should be as the master asserted. This tradition, first related by Abu Hurayrah, was handed down to him through Ibn Abu Nu'aym, Fudayl b. Ghazwan and Abd Allah. This is a fair and genuine tradition. And on this same subject, traditions are related by Suwayd b. Muqarrin and 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar. As for Ibn Abu Nu'aym, he is 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abu Nu'aym whose *kunya* is Abu al-Hakam".27

These three examples should suffice to show the nature of the remarks made by al-Tirmidhi on the traditions included in his *Jami'*. He described the traditions, however, as *Sahih* (genuine), *Hasan* (fair,) *Sahih Hasan* (genuine-fair), *Hasan*

*Sahih* (fair-genuine), *Gharib* (rare), *Da'if* (weak), *Munkar* (undetermined), etc. The most important feature of the *Jami'* so far as the determination of the relative value of reliability of traditions is concerned is the description of (some) traditions as *Hasan* (fair).

To this class belong most of the traditions on which a large part of the rituals and laws of Islam is based. The term had already been used by Ahmad b. Hansal, al-Bukhari and others<sup>28</sup>—but sparingly, and probably in a loose sense. Al-Tirmidhi realized the importance of these *Ahadith* as a source of Islamic law, defined the term for the first time in the *Kitab al-'Ilal* of his *Jami'*, and applied it to those traditions which fulfilled its requirements.

Al-Tirmidhi has defined a *Hasan* tradition as one that has been related by such narrators as are not accused of falsehood, that has been handed down by more than one chain of authorities, and is not contrary to what has been related by other reliable narrators in general. Such traditions cannot be called genuine, because their genuineness, according to the traditional canons, has not been proved. But it would be equally wrong to declare them to be entirely unreliable, because neither does the character of their narrators warrant such a judgment, nor can an unfavourable view of them be justified by a comparison with traditions which have been handed down by authorities which in general are reliable. Their reliability or unreliability depends on the nature of the particular traditions and the character of their narrators, and must, therefore, be different in different cases. Some of these traditions may be nearly, though not exactly, as reliable as the genuine traditions. Some may be almost, though not quite, as unreliable as traditions related by known narrators.

In order to define this class of traditions and determine the degree of its reliability, al-Tirmidhi described some of them as *Sahih Hasan*, some as *Hasan*, and some as *Hasan Gharib*. But he has not been quite consistent in his use of the term, *Hasan* on account of which many Traditionists have criticised him. Efforts have been made in various ways to

explain his inconsistency.<sup>29</sup> But none of them can satisfy the standards of precision of a modern critic. The *Jami'* of al-Tirmidhi, however, in its general scientific form, and in the nature of its criticism, has been accepted by the Traditionists as a unique work in *Hadith* literature.

### THE SUNAN OF AL-NASA'I

Another important *Sunan* work is that compiled by Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i, who was born in the year 214 or 215 A.H. (6 or 7 years after al-Tirmidhi) at Nasa,' a town in Khurasan. Having received his early education in his own province, he went at the age of 15 to Balkh, where he studied traditions with Qutayba b. Sa'id for more than a year.<sup>30</sup> He travelled widely in pursuit of *Hadith*, and settled down in Egypt where one of his teachers, Yunus b. 'Abd al-'Ala, was still living. In the year 302/914 he went to Damascus. Here he found the inhabitants holding erroneous views against 'Ali b. Abi Tablib—under the influence of the Umayyads. In order to guide the people to the right course, he composed a book on the merits of 'Ali, and wanted to read it out from the pulpit of a mosque. The people, instead of giving him a patient hearing, ill-treated him, kicked him, and drove him out of the mosque. He was seriously injured, and did not live long after this incident. He died in the year 303/915.<sup>31</sup>

Nasa'i was recognized as the best Traditionist of his time. 'Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Hanbal, Muhammad b. Ibrahim, and some other important Traditionists selected him unanimously as the best of all the teachers of *Hadith* at that time, and 'Ali b. 'Umar repeatedly declared him to be the foremost Traditionist of his age.<sup>32</sup> His care about traditions is evident from the fact that, in connection with the traditions related by al-Harith, he (Nasa'i) never used the term *Haddathana* or *Akhbarana*, as he did in the case of those traditions which had been related to him by other teachers. Nasa'i points out that the traditions he learned from al-Harith were read by

the latter in his (Nasa'i's) hearing. Nasa'i himself was not allowed to attend the lectures of al-Harith, and so in order to hear them, he had to hide himself at the gate of the lecture room.

In his large work on *Sunan* (which, he confessed, contained a good many weak and doubtful traditions), al-Nasa'i compiled those legal traditions which he considered to be either fairly reliable or of possible reliability. At the request of some of his friends, he also compiled out of the *Sunan* a smaller work which is called *al-Mujtana*, or *al-Sunan al-Sughra*. Al-Nasa'i claimed that this smaller work contained only reliable traditions. It is accepted as one of the six canonical collections.<sup>33</sup>

In this book, al-Nasa'i entirely ignored the point of view of his senior contemporary, al-Tirmidhi—viz. the question of the application of traditions to various problems, that might have been made by the different schools of the Muslim jurists. Al-Nasa'i's main object was only to establish the text of traditions and the differences between their various versions—almost all of which he quotes *in extenso*, instead of only referring to them as Abu Da'ud and al-Tirmidhi had done. In many places, he gives headings to the differences between the various narrators, and mentions the least differences in their narrations (which is described by Goldziher as 'pettifogging').<sup>34</sup> But this 'pettifogging' method is of great importance to the exactitude of a Traditionist, and is not limited only to the chapters on rituals (as Goldziher says), but is extensively applied also in other chapters. In some cases, after giving the various versions of a *Hadith*, al-Nasa'i points out some of them to be incorrect, and some to be correct. In the choice of his authorities, he had been strict. As a matter of fact, it is said that his canons of criticism of the narrators were more strict than those of Muslim.<sup>35</sup> The book, however, contains many weak and doubtful traditions related by unknown narrators of dubious veracity.<sup>36</sup>



## THE SUNAN OF AL-DARIMI (181-255/797-868)

Another important *Sunan* work is that of al-Darimi. It is the earliest *Sunan* work received by us. An old manuscript copy of the book was brought from Mecca, and lithographed and published in India at the instance of Nawwab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, a great patron of *Hadith* learning in the last century.

The author of the *Sunan*, Abu Muhammad 'Abd Allaih b. 'Abd al-Rahman, was descended from the Arabian tribe of Banu Darim, an off-shoot of the great clan of Banu Tamim,<sup>37</sup> to which he belonged probably by *muwalat*. He was born in the year 181/797. He travelled a good deal in pursuit of traditions, and studied them with important Traditionists of his time—e.g. Yazid b. Harun, Sa'id b. Amir, and others. Darimi was known for his interest in traditions and for his veracity and piety. The keenness of his intellect, and his wide knowledge, were generally recognized. His was offered the post of judge at Samarqand. But he did not accept it until he was pressed hard to do so. Having accepted the post, he resigned from it immediately after deciding just one case.<sup>38</sup> He died in the year 255/868.<sup>39</sup>

*Sunan al-Darimi* has been described by certain important Traditionists as a *Musnad* work.<sup>40</sup> This is obviously a mistake—unless the term be used in its general sense. Some Traditionists call it a *sahih* (a collection of genuine traditions). But this also is a mistake; for the book contains many traditions which do not satisfy the conditions necessary for them to be considered genuine.

The *Sunan* contains 3,550 traditions, which are arranged in 1,408 chapters according to their contents.<sup>41</sup> One of the special features of the book is its general introductory chapter in which the compiler has collected together (from various chapters) traditions connected with certain practices of the Arabs before Islam; traditions connected with the life and the character of the Prophet; traditions connected with the writing down of traditions, and traditions about the high

place of knowledge, etc. In the general plan of the body of the book, al-Darimi has followed the same system as had been followed by later compilers of *Sunana* works. In the body of the book, after some traditions, the compiler adds notes, in some of which he gives his own opinion on certain problems, or identifies some narrators, or criticises their character, or points out the difference between their versions of a tradition. But such notes in the book are very few and too short in comparison with those in the works which have been discussed above.

The book is generally accepted as reliable,<sup>42</sup> and has been pronounced by some Traditionists to be the sixth of the canonical collections.<sup>43</sup> But it never attained the position of any of the first three works, because it contains more weak and defective traditions than they do.<sup>44</sup>

#### THE SUNAN OF IBN MAJA

Most of the Traditionists preferred the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja to that of al-Darimi, and include it among the most reliable works in *Hadith*, instead of the latter. The compiler of this work, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Yazid, (generally known as Ibn Maja which was the title of his father or grandfather) was born at Qazwin in the year 209. A.H. He visited the important centres of learning in Persia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Egypt, and learnt traditions from the well-known Traditionists of his time. He compiled several works in *Hadith* of which the most important is the *Sunan*. In this work, Ibn Maja collected together 4000 traditions in 32 books divided into 1500 chapters. It is reported that, having compiled the book, Ibn Maja presented it for criticism to Abu Zar's, the best critic of *Hadith* at the time. Abu Zar's liked the general plan of the works as well as the arrangement of the material, and remarked that he expected that this work would supersede the *Hadith* works which had been in general use. He also said that the number of weak traditions in the book was not large (a little over 30).<sup>45</sup>

But the book contains a good many traditions which have been declared by authorities on the subject to be forged ones. Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq of Delhi says this of the traditions about Qazwin (a town in Persia to which Ibn Maja belonged)<sup>46</sup> and Ibn al-Jauzi has declared in his work on *Maudu'* at that all the traditions on the merits of individuals or tribes or towns have been concocted. And many such traditions are found in *Sunan Ibn Maja*.

#### THE SUNAN OF AL-DARAQUTNI (306-385-A.H.)

Another *Sunan* work of some importance was compiled by Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. 'Umar, generally known as al-Daraqutni (on account of his residence in the quarter called Dar Qutn in Baghdad).

Al-Daraqutni was born in the year 306/918. He excelled in Arabic literature and various Islamic sciences — especially Traditions and Readings (*qira'a*) from the Qur'an. His book on the latter subject has been acknowledged as the first work of its type, the general plan of which has been followed by all the later authors. His knowledge of the Arabic language was recognized by authorities on the subject during his own life-time. His wide knowledge of traditions, their narrators and the narrators' character were acknowledged by his contemporaries as well as by his successors.<sup>47</sup> Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad (generally known as al-Hakim) of Nishapur, the great critic of traditions, Abu Nu'aym Ahmad of Isfahan (whose *Hilyat al-Auliya'* is said to be the best work on the biography of the saints),<sup>48</sup> Tammam of Ray (the author of the *Fawa'i*), and 'Abd al-Ghani b. Sa'id, the Traditionist, were students of Daraqutni and recognized his wide critical knowledge of *Hadith*.

Al-Hakim who narrated traditions from about 2,000 Traditionists<sup>49</sup>, remarked that he had never met a Traditionist like Daraqutni. For whenever any subject was discussed with him (Daraqutni), he showed a wide knowledge of it.<sup>50</sup>

Al-Daraqutni was specially interested in traditions, on which subject he was taken as the best authority in his time. Every Traditionist who visited Baghdad made it a point to see him, and acknowledged his greatness. Abu Mansur b. Karkhi, while compiling his *Musnad*, depended upon Daraqutni's help in determining the defective traditions; and Abu Bakr al-Barqani based his work on traditions<sup>51</sup> on the notes which were dictated by Daraqutni to Abu Mansur. He also rendered material help in the compilation of a *Musnad* work to Ibn Hinzaba, the able and learned minister of the Ikhshidid rulers of Egypt. Having learnt that *Musnad* was being compiled, Daraqutni travelled from Baghdad to Egypt and stayed there till the work was completed. Throughout this period Ibn Hinzaba showed him great respect and regard, and finally bestowed upon him rich rewards.<sup>52</sup>

Daraqutni himself composed many useful works on *Hadith* and connected subjects. A list of them is given by Wustenfeld in his work on the Shafi'is.<sup>53</sup> The most important of these works for our purpose is the *Sunan* which was recognized as one of the reliable compilations of *Hadith*—next in importance to the six canonical collections. It was used by al-Baghawi (d. 416 A.H.) as one of the chief sources for his *Masabih al-Sunnah*.<sup>54</sup>

Daraqutni collected together in his *Sunan* such traditions as he considered to be fairly reliable, giving their various *Isanads* and different versions. Of the very first *Hadith*, for example, he gave 5 different versions, with 54 different chains of authorities, some of which he declared as weak (BM, 48). He added to certain traditions some notes in which he tried to establish their degree of reliability and the identity of some of their narrators, and criticises, and criticised their character and reliability. The number of weak traditions in his *Sunan*, however, is fairly large. It is at any rate larger than in any of the *Sunan* works included in the canonical collections; and therefore it has not been included among them.

## THE SUNAN OF AL-BAYHAQI (384-458/994-1065)

After Daraqutni, another *Sunan* was compiled by Abu Bakr Ahmad b. al-Husayn of Bayhaq, a group of villages near Nishapur. Al-Bayhaqi was born in the year 384. He studied traditions with more than 100 eminent Traditionists of his time—including Abu 'Abd Allah al-Hakim, one of the greatest Traditionists of the time, of whom al-Bayhaqi was the most eminent pupil. Having excelled in the various Islamic sciences, al-Bayhaqi began his career as an author, and composed a large number of works on traditions and on the Shafi'i system of Muhammadan law. Some of these works are said to be unparalleled in the history of Arabic literature.<sup>55</sup> Al-Bayhaqi's reputation as a Traditionist and a jurist attracted the attention of the Muslim scholars of Nishapur, who invited him to their town and requested him to read one of his books with them. They recognized his greatness when their request was granted by him.<sup>56</sup> He died in the year 458/1065.

Al-Bayhaqi was a prolific writer. It is said that he composed about 1000 books and treatises. Among them, his two *Sunan* works are well known. It is said that they are unique in their general plan and the method of treatment.<sup>57</sup>

## THE SUNAN OF SA'ID B. MANSUR (D. 227/841)

Earlier than all the *Sunan* works mentioned above is that of Abu 'Uthman Sa'id b. Mansur b. Shu'ba. He was born at Merv, and was brought up at Balkh. He wandered through a large part of the Islamic world, and at last settled down in Mecca where he died in the year 227/841.

He learnt traditions with prominent Traditionists like Malik, Hammad, Abu 'Awana and others; and from them he related *Ahadith* to such Traditionists as gained great reputation at a later period—e.g. Muslim, Abu Da'ud and Ahmad b. Hanbal, who had respect and regard for Sa'id b. Mansur.<sup>58</sup>

He compiled his *Sunan* near the end of his life, and is said to have had great confidence in his work.<sup>59</sup> The *Sunan* is said to have contained a large number of such traditions as had been received by him from Muhammad through three mediums<sup>60</sup> only.

#### THE SUNAN OF ABU MUSLIM AL-KASHSHI (D. 282/895)

Another of the early *Sunan* works is that of Abu Muslim Ibrahim b. 'Allah al-Kashshi. His *nisba* has been variously explained, i.e. by reference to his forefathers, or his place of residence (a village called Kashsh in the province of Khuzistan).<sup>61</sup> The latter explanation seems to be supported by the fact that he took a prominent part in the battles which were fought near Khuzistan.

He learnt traditions with eminent Traditionists of his time like Abu 'Asim al-Nabil, Abu 'Awana and others.

He visited Baghdad where he delivered some lectures on traditions. His fame and reputation attracted an incredibly large number of students. His voice could not reach all of them. Seven persons, therefore, were appointed to reproduce his lectures to such of his audience as could not hear him. After he had finished his lectures and the crowd had dispersed the place occupied by them was measured and a count was taken of the ink-pots left by those who had brought them in order to take notes from his lectures. The number of the audience was estimated to have been more than 40,000. Abu Muslim died in the year 282. A.H.<sup>62</sup>

Abu Muslim devoted his best efforts and attention to his *Sunan*, which is said to have contained many such traditions as had been received by him from the Prophet, through three narrators only.<sup>63</sup>

Many other *Sunan* works were compiled by different Traditionists, but few of them acquired any importance or recognition in the Muslim world.

## THE MU'JAM WORKS

Though many of the *Mu'jam* works were compiled side by side with the *Musnads* and the *Sunans*, they never acquired the importance of the *Sunan* works in *Hadith* literature many of them. The best known of them are the *Mu'jams* of Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Aiyub al-Tabarani, who is generally known by his *nisba*.

Al-Tabarani was born at Tiberias in 260/873. He travelled in pursuit of traditions through a large part of the Islamic world, and visited all the important centres of *Hadith* learning in Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia. He learnt traditions from 1000 Traditionists of his time. Having completed his studies, he settled down at Isfahan in 290/902, where a pension was fixed for him.<sup>64</sup> He lived there for 70 years, teaching *Hadith* to students and compiling various works on the subject. He died in the 360/970 at the age of 100 years.

His wide learning of traditions and his pious, reliable character as their narrator has been generally recognized.<sup>65</sup>

Of his works, a list of which may be found in the *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*,<sup>66</sup> the most important are the three *Mu'jams*. The longest of them, commonly known as *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, is really a *Musnad* work.<sup>67</sup> It contains about 25,000 traditions which have been collected together under the names of the various Companions by whom they are narrated, the names being arranged in alphabetical order. The medium (*awasat*) *Mu'jam* of Tabarani is also a large work divided into 6 volumes. It contains the rare traditions narrated to the compiler by his teachers whose names, together with their traditions, are given in alphabetical order. The author took pride in this work, which shows his wide knowledge of the subject. But it contains many weak traditions. The shortest of Tabarani's *Mu'jam* works is known as *al-Mu'jam al-Saghir*, and has been lithographed at Delhi. This book is, according to the compiler's own statement, his first *Mu'jam* and contains only one tradition related by each

of his teachers.<sup>68</sup> But we find that about the end of the book the compiler has given two or three traditions with the same *Isnad*<sup>69</sup>.

Many other *Mu'jam* works had been compiled before and after those of al-Tabarani. Some of them are mentioned by Haji Khalifa.<sup>70</sup>

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE VARIOUS WORKS IN HADITH LITERATURE

The works in *Hadith* literature have been classified by the Traditionists into four categories, according to their reliability and importance. To the first category belong those works which are considered the most reliable. These are (i) the *Muwatta* of Malik, (ii) *Sahih al-Bukhari*, and (iii) *Sahih Muslim*.<sup>71</sup> The latter two works include almost all the traditions contained in the *Muwatta*, on account of which most of the important Traditionists did not include it in the six canonical collections. These three books have been generally accepted as authentic since the life-time of their authors. The *Muwatta* was declared by al-Shafi'i to be the most authentic book after the Qur'an.<sup>72</sup> As has already been said, the *Sahih al-Bukhari* was received by 90,000 students from the author himself, and was accepted as reliable by important Traditionists of his time—e.g. Abu al-Hasan b. al-Qattan<sup>73</sup> and others.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, the *Sahih* of Muslim was not long in receiving the general recognition of the traditionists.

To the second category belong the four *Sunan* works which, together with the two *Sahihs*, are known as *al-Kutub al-Sitta*. The tendency to associate some of the *Sunan* works with the two *Sahihs* appears, as Goldziher has shown<sup>75</sup>, to have begun about the middle of the fourth century when Sa'id b. al-Sakan (one of the distinguished Traditionists who died in 353/964 in Egypt, and whose *Musannaf* was recognized a century after his death by Ibn Hazm as one of the best collections of *Hadith*) had once declared that the two *Sahihs*



of al-Bukhari and Muslim respectively and the two *Sunans* of Abu Da'ud and al-Nasa'i respectively were the foundations of Islam. After some time the *Jami'* of al-Tirmidhi was added to the above four books and the five books together were given the distinguished title of *al-Usul al-Khamisa*.<sup>76</sup>

It is difficult to determine when the *Jami'* of al-Tirmidhi received the recognition of the Traditionists in general. Ibn Hazm, whose list of reliable works in *Hadith* we have received<sup>77</sup>, made some criticism against the book, because it contained traditions related by al-Maslub and al-Kalbi.<sup>78</sup> But it is probable that the general recognition of Tirmidhi's *J or F ami'* preceded that of the work of Ibn Maja, which was added to the five books (raising the number of the canonical collections to six) for the first time by Abu al-Fadl Muhammad b. Tahir, who died in the beginning of the sixth century (505/1113). But as Goldziher has pointed out, throughout the sixth century, the pride of place was denied by the Traditionists to the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja. Razin b. Mu'awiva (d. 535/1140) in his Compendium of the Six Books (*Tajrid al-Sihah al-Sitta*), did not recognize the *Sunan* of Maja as a canonical collection. It was just a century after Muhammad b. Tahir that the book was again recognized as one of the six collections of *Hadith* by 'Abd al-Ghani (d. 600/1203) in his *al-Kamal fi Ma'rifat al-Rijal*, by Ibn al-Najjar (d. 643/1245) in his *Rijal al-Kutub al-Sitta*, by Ibn Taymiya (d. 652/1254) in his *al-Muntaqa* (which was based on the six books including the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja), by Najib al-Din b. Syaqa (d. 672/1273) in his collection of traditions, by Shams al-Din al-Jazari (d. 711/1311) in his work on the subject, and by al-Mizzi (d. 742/1341) in his *Atraf*. It may, therefore, be assumed (as Goldziher suggests) that from the seventh century the six books had been generally recognized by the whole world of Islam as reliable collections of *Hadith*.<sup>79</sup>

But within these six books, if the position of the two *Sahihs* was always supreme and unparalleled, the place of the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja always remained doubtful. Abu 'Umar 'Uthman b. Salah (d. 643/1245) and following him

al-Nawawi (d. 676/1277) and also Ibn Khaldun (d.808/1405) recognized only five books, and excluded the *Sunan* of Ibn Maja from the category of the generally accepted books.<sup>80</sup> Ibn al-Athir al-Jazri<sup>81</sup> (d. 630/1234), Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq of Delhi,<sup>82</sup> and others replaced it either by the *Muwatta* or the *Sunan* of al-Darmi. The other works included in the six best works have been accepted by all the important Muslim doctors of both the East and the West as the most authentic works and are included in the various selections of the best ten works in *Hadith*.

The main principles which guided the Traditionists in giving preference to these six works appear to be based on the following facts:—

- (i) that their compilers laid down certain principles of criticism and selection of *Hadith* for their collections;
- (ii) that the principal parts of their contents consisted of genuine or fair traditions, and such of them as were weak were either stated to be so, or were negligible in number;
- (iii) that the authorities on the subject had examined in detail the value of the various traditions, discussed the reliability of their narrators, and explained the rare *ahadith* contained in them, so that the merits as well as the demerits of the works and the reliability or the unreliability of their contents had been discussed and made known; and
- (iv) that the Traditionists in general, having examined them thoroughly, accepted them as reliable and used them as foundations for establishing legal principles and theological inferences.

To the third category belong such *Musnads*, *Musannafs* and other collections as had been compiled before or after the *Sahihs* of al-Bukhari and Muslim. These contained reliable as well as unreliable traditions, and had neither been thoroughly examined by the Traditionists nor largely used by the jurists. Such are the *Musnads* of 'Abd b. Humayd and

of Abu Da'ud al-Tayalisi, and the *Musannaf* works of 'Abd al-Razzaq, of Abu Bakr b. Abi Shayba and others.

To the fourth category belong the collections of *ahadith*, made by those compilers who collected together during a later period such traditions as were not found in the works of the early compilers, and who included in their collections a large number of forged traditions. The *Musnad* of al-Khwarazmi may be included in this class.

According to some authorities on traditions,<sup>83</sup> there is a fifth category of *Hadith* works which consists of such traditions as are declared by the Muslim doctors to be unreliable and forged.

### Notes

1. TA, 709. Wustenfeld (sh, 91) doubts the accuracy of the statement that Abu Da'ud had been engaged on his book for 20 years.
2. KAS, 293; TA, 709.
3. WA, No. 271.
4. Sh. No. 47.
5. MBn, iii, 44.
6. KAS, 293.
7. TK, ii, 48.
8. MBn, iii, 44.
9. TA, 710.
10. TK, ii, 49.
11. TA, 710.
12. Sh, 93; KZ, iii, 622ff.
13. MSt, ii, 250.
14. Abd Da'ud's *Risalah* to the people of Mecca cited in TT,
15. SAD, i, 4.
16. SAD, i, 26.
17. *Ibid*, 32-33.
18. *Ibid*, 133-134.
19. *Ibid*, 138.
20. *Ibid*, 162.
21. *Ibid*, i, 221.
22. *Ibid*.
23. TA, 711-12.
24. BM, 121.
25. JT, i, 5.
26. JTJ, i, 13.
27. *Ibid*, ii, 16.
28. MIS, 14-15.
29. MIS, 14 ff.; TR, 53-54.
30. TK, ii, 83-84; WA, No. 28,

31. Sh, 70.
32. TdH, ii, 268.
33. TK, ii, 84.
34. MSt, ii, 252.
35. TdH, ii, 268.
36. KZ, iii, 626-27.
37. SD, ed. intro. 6.
38. KAS, 218b; TdH, ii, 115-17.
39. TKh, ii, 341.
40. MIS, p. 15.
41. SD, ed. intro., p. 7; BM 48.
42. MIS, 15.
43. MAA, Intro.
44. KZ, v, 540.
45. TdH, ii, 209 ff.
46. MAA, intro.
47. TB, xii, 34-40.
48. WA, No. 32.
49. *Ibid*, No. 626.
50. *Ibid*, p. 38.
51. *Ibid*.
52. *Ibid*, Nos. 132, 445.
53. Sh, No. 235.
54. MS, 2.
55. TK, iii, 4.
56. *Ibid*, 3-5.
57. KZ, iii, 627.
58. TdH, ii, 5.
59. TT, iii, No. 148
60. TdH, ii, 5; BM, 51.
61. KAS, sub nom.
62. TdH, ii, 195.
63. TB, vi, 122.
64. TdH, iii, 129.
65. KAS, 366a; MBn, iii, 511-12.
66. TdH, iii, 127-28.
67. KZ, v, 629.
68. MSg, 1.
69. *Ibid*. 183, 240, 241, 248, etc.
70. KZ, v, 623-30.
71. HB, i, 132-34.
72. *Ibid*.
73. MIS, 8.
74. FM, 16.
75. MSt, ii, 262.
76. TR, 29.
77. *Ibid*, 32.
78. *Ibid*, 56.
79. MSt, ii, 262-63.
80. MSt, loc. cit.
81. *Ibid*, ii, 264-65.
82. *Ibid*, 265-67.
83. e.g. Shah Waliy Allah of Delhi. See HB, i, 134-35.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### ***Some of the Special Features of The Hadith Literature***

Every branch of literature develops certain marked features on account of its particular subject matter, the distinctive character of the people who cultivate it and take part in its development, and the special social or political or historical conditions in which it originates and flourishes. *Hadith* literature is no exception to this rule. Its hero, the Prophet of Islam, and the movement started by him attracted the serious attention of all the people of Arabia, including his friends as well as his enemies. His words and deeds were minutely observed by his opponents as well as by his supporters. While his opponents made use of them in their opposition to him, his supporters tried to follow him scrupulously in whatever he did or said. The reports of his words and deeds served as a basis for Islamic law, the Islamic social system and Islamic polity.

On account of the great importance of these reports, the Prophet's enemies as well as some of his misguided friends forged a large number of them, falsely attributing them to him. But his sincere friends and followers tried their best to check these forgeries; they established certain principles on the basis of which to criticise the forged reports and to establish the true ones among them. They made it imperative for the reporters to give the names of the narrators through whom they received the reports. This chain of narrators is known among the Traditionists as the system of *Isnad*. They tried to be as exact in their reports as was humanly possible. The women as well the men took a prominent part in transmitting these reports to future generations. They declared

as unreliable all those reporters who were suspected of forging their reports. In order to check their veracity, the Traditionists created a huge literature on the life and character of every reporter—i.e. the *Asma'al-Rijal*. In criticising the suspect reporters, the Traditionists did not differentiate between the high and the low, or between the rulers or their officials and the common people. As a matter of fact, the important specialists and critics of these reporters generally dissociated themselves from state officials, partisans in the civil war between the various parties of Muslims, and sectarian leaders.

These special features of *Hadith* literature and of its devotees will be dealt with in detail in the following pages.

### 1. FORGERY IN HADITH

It has been accepted by all the Traditionists that there has been a great deal of forgery committed in *Hadith*. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal said that in no other branch of literature had there been so much forgery committed as in *Hadith* and *Tafsir*. The very existence of a large body of literature on the *Maudu'at* (forged traditions) is a sure proof of the extensive forgery committed in *Hadith* literature. On account of these forgeries, the whole of *Hadith* literature has been branded by several Orientalists as unreliable and inauthentic.

It is an interesting problem to determine the period when forgery in *Hadith* began. Sir William Muir is of the opinion that it began during the caliphate of 'Uthman.<sup>1</sup> But I think that it originated during the lifetime of the Prophet himself. His opponents could not have failed to forge and attribute to him words and deeds for which he was not responsible. It was their purpose in thus misrepresenting him to arouse public opinion against him. As a matter of fact, Ibn Hazm has accepted this explanation, and quoted an incident which took place during the lifetime of the Prophet. He says: After the Prophet's *Hijra*, a man went to a suburb of Madina, and told a tribe living there that the Prophet had given him

authority over them. He had resorted to this fraud because he wanted to marry a girl who was a member of the tribe, to whom he had proposed marriage before the Hijra, but who had never been given in marriage to him. The tribe sent a messenger to the Prophet to make enquiries concerning the authority that was claimed in his name. The Prophet denounced the pretender, and ordered that he be put to death—if he were still alive.<sup>2</sup>

The Hypocrites (*Munafiqun*) must have forged a good many traditions and attributed them to the Prophet. During the caliphate of Abu Bakr also, when apostasy had raised its head, it is not unlikely that some of the apostates may have forged such traditions as suited their purpose. It may be due to this forgery that Abu Bakr and 'Umar b. al-Khattab were extremely strict in accepting traditions which were reported to them.

During the caliphate of 'Uthman, the forgery of traditions became more common. Some of the members of the parties into which the Muslims were then divided, forged traditions in order to advance their own party's interests. By and by, this practice assumed larger dimensions. The various political parties, the heretics, the professional preachers, and even some of the sincere, God-fearing Muslims (who thought that it was an act of religious merit to forge traditions in order to induce people to lead a pious life and to do what is laid down by religion), all made their contributions to the increasing stock of traditions falsely attributed to the Prophet.

The heretics alone forged thousands of traditions.<sup>3</sup> But more dangerous than these were the leaders of the political parties within religious sects. They also forged traditions in praise of their different leaders and in support of their own views on religious problems. Still more dangerous were the professional preachers and story-tellers who, in order to attract a large number of credulous hearers, forged many traditions of a kind that would be certain to appeal to the common people.<sup>4</sup>

All these various groups of forgers created havoc in *Hadith* literature. But in order to counter this great danger of forgery, and to sift the forged traditions from the true ones, the sincere and honest Traditionists introduced the system of *Isnad* and laid down important principles which are discussed in the works on *Diryat al-Hadith* (Criticism of *Hadith*).

## 2. THE SYSTEM OF ISNAD (CHAIN OF TRANSMITTERS)

Each tradition in every collection of traditions (till the end of the third century of the Hijra) contains the chain of its transmitters—from the Prophet or from a Companion or from a Follower down to the last reporter or compiler. The Traditionists called this chain of transmitters an *Isnad*, or authority. They attached great importance to it, and considered it as an indispensable part of a tradition. They tried to determine the relative value of the reliability of the various *Isnads* and of their different classes. To this end, they produced a vast literature on the biographies of the transmitters, developing the system into almost a science. Since the compilation of the collections of traditions and the composition of the works on the various connected subjects, they have applied the method of *Isnad* to those works as well as their manuscripts. For Muslims, this system of *Isnad* is a matter of great pride.

To determine the origin of the system of *Isnad* is a difficult but interesting problem. Caetani<sup>5</sup> and Horovitz<sup>6</sup> have tried to solve it. A. Harley has summarized their conclusions in his introduction to the *Musnad* of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz.<sup>7</sup> And Prof. J. Robson has collected together most of what has been written by the Muslim scholars and the Orientalists on the subject, and has tried to evaluate it.<sup>8</sup>

Caetani has tried to show that the system of *Isnad* could not have originated among the Arabs. The wild desolation of the Arabian deserts, and the restive nature and character of the primitive, ignorant, uncivilized and intolerant Arabs



would not have favoured its origin and early growth among them. But Caetani's contention is based more on presumption than on facts. If accepted, it would only prove that the system of *Isnad* did not originate with the Arabs. With whom, then, did it originate? The great Italian orientalist has failed to give any example of its use by any other people.

Professor Margoliouth also, in his lectures on the Arabic Historians, only says, *en passant*, that the Greeks and the Romans rarely used it.<sup>9</sup>

Professor Horovitz has carried his researches further. Giving several instances from Jewish literature, he has proved that *Isnad* was used by the Jews before the Arabs. He has also tried to show that its use in Jewish literature was found "as early as the Mosaic period, and by Talmudic times, its chain assumed enormous length, the subject matter being of the most varied nature."<sup>10</sup>

But the main facts discovered by the detailed research of the distinguished modern German Orientalist had already been dealt with by a mediaeval scholar of Andalusia, Abu Muhammad 'Ali b. Ahmad, in his *al-Fisal fi al-Milal*.<sup>11</sup>

Abu Muhammad (364-456/994-1064), commonly known as Ibn Hazm, is recognized by Muslim scholars as one of the greatest geniuses of Islam, and as one of the two most prolific Muslim writers—the other being the famous historian, Muhammad b. Jirir al-Tabari<sup>12</sup>. Ibn Hazm has described in detail the various forms of the transmission of matters relating to the Islamic religion from the Prophet of Islam to future generations. He has divided them into six classes:—

- (i) the transmission of traditions from the Prophet to future generations by an overwhelming number of persons, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, of every generation, without any difference of opinion among them;
- (ii) their unanimous transmission by all the Muslim doctors of every generation since the time of the Prophet;

- (iii) their transmission from the Prophet by reliable persons of known identity and established reliability of every generation, each of them stating the name of his authority;
- (iv) their transmission by any one of the three classes of transmitters just mentioned, not from the Prophet, but from a person belonging to the generation next to the Prophet, the earliest transmitter being silent about the source of his information;
- (v) their transmission by any of the various classes of persons mentioned above, from the Prophet himself, but through a chain of the transmitters including a person who is known either to be a liar, or to be careless in his statements, or to be one whose reliability has been questioned; and
- (vi) their transmission by a chain of transmitters similar to that in the first three classes, but stopping either at a Companion or at a Follower or at any Imam after them who did not make any reference to the Prophet in his statement.

While dealing with these classes of the forms of transmission (*Isnad*), some of which overlap with one another, Ibn Hazm has made some remarks about their use by the Christians and the Jews. He says that the first three classes of transmission are entirely wanting in Christian as well as in Jewish literature. According to him, these two religions are based on the Old Testament and the New Testament. The *Isnad* of the former does not go back to Moses—rather, it stops short of him by many generations; and the latter is finally based on the testimony of five persons, the reliability of each of whom has been questioned. About the third class of *Isnad*, Ibn Hazm says that it is a special feature of Islamic literature. The last three classes of *Isnad*, however, are according to him found in Christian as well as in Jewish literature. The first of them (of the last three classes) is particularly frequent in Jewish literature; whereas only one

example of it (viz. the law relating to the impermissibility of divorce) is to be found in Christian literature. As regards the last two classes of *Isnad*, Ibn Hazm observes that they are found in abundance in the religious literature of both the Christians and the Jews. He has also given certain details of the differences between the forms of transmission found in Islamic literature and those used by the Christians and the Jews.

These observations show that not only the main results of the researches of Horovitz, but also some of their details, had been anticipated and discussed eight centuries before him. As regards the statement of Horovitz that the system of *Isnad* was used by the Jews as early as the Mosaic period, it is certainly open to grave doubts, to which Ibn Hazm has alluded. Horovitz has not proved that these *Isnads* are not later interpolations.

The Indians also used the system of *Isnad* long before the Muslims. But as far as I am aware, no serious notice of this fact has so far been taken. It was pointed out to me for the first time by my late friend, Dr. Prabodhchandra Bagchi, the Vice-Chancellor of the Visva-Bharati University (India). According to him, occasional use of the *Isnad* is found in ancient Indian literature—Hindu, Buddhist as well as Jaina. In the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, we find: "Vydsa composed it, Ganesa served as a scribe, and the work was handed down by Vaisampayana, who communicated it to King Janamejaya. Sauti, who was present at the time, heard it and narrated it to the assembly of sages."<sup>13</sup> The *Puranas* also contain some short *Isnad*. The *Sutras* (exegesis on Vedic literature) contain short chains of some of the transmitters through whom they have been handed down. In the *Sankhayana Aranyaka* (translated by Keith, pp. 71-72) and the *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* (*Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xv, pp. 224-27) the long lines of the successive teachers of these texts are given. In the first case, there is a list of 18 teachers, and in the latter case, out of several lists, the longest is of 27 teachers. In Buddhistic literature of the early period, no

chain of transmitters (*Isnad*) is to be found. The text is almost always introduced with the common formula : "Thus I heard once the Lord sojourned at ..." <sup>14</sup> But in the later literature, long chains of transmitters are frequent—particularly, in such Sanskrit-Buddhist texts as are preserved in Tibetan translation. The colophon of the *Sadanga-yoga*, for example, contains the following chain of its successive transmitters:—

Buddha Vajradhara: Nagarjuna: Nagabodhi: Aryadeva:  
Chandrakirti: Sakyaraksita: Ratnamitra: Dharmabhadra:  
Gunamati: Manjusriijnana: Amoghasri: Viramati:  
VijayaKirti: Varaprajnadhar-mabhadra: Sribhadra:  
Dharmapala: Sakyadhraja: Vagisvarakirti: Ratnakirti:  
Vanaratna and Dharmabuddhi.

The last-mentioned of these transmitters, who came from Eastern India, translated the text from Sanskrit into Tibetan, by the order of the master of Ron, with the assistance of Manjusriijnana, a Tibetan scholar from Stagtshan (Tibet). <sup>15</sup>

More important than the question of the origin of *Isnad* (for our purpose), however, is to determine the period of its first application to *Hadith*. Caetani again holds that al-Zuhri (d. 124/741) was the first to apply it to traditions, and that it was further developed by his pupils, Musa b. 'Uqba (d. 141/757) and Ibn Ishaq (d. 151/768), and others. According to Caetani, therefore, *Isnad* in traditions began and developed during the first half of the second century A.H. <sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Horovitz is of the opinion that the first appearance of *Isnad* in traditions was not later than the last third of the first century A.H. <sup>17</sup> Having given hard facts in support of his theory, he says: "*Isnad* in its primitive form was then—somewhere about the year 75 A.H. — already established, and one has no right, merely because it appears only incidentally in the letters, to deny to 'Urwa (who according to Caetani never used the *Isnad*) without further consideration, those *Ahadith* supplied with statements of authorities for which he stands as sponsor...*Isnad* was indeed already customary in his ('Urwa's) time, but it was not yet an absolute necessity." <sup>18</sup>

But J. Schacht is definitely of the opinion that *Isnad* is the most arbitrary part of traditions<sup>19</sup>, and that there is no reason to suppose that the regular practice of using *Isnads* goes further back than the beginning of the second century A. H.<sup>20</sup> He has not discussed the first appearance of *Isnad* in *Hadith*. He has quoted the well-known remark of Ibn Sirin about the beginning of *Isnad* in *Hadith*.<sup>21</sup> He interprets the word *fitna*, used by Ibn Sirin, as referring to the civil war which began with the killing of the Umayyad Caliph, Walid b. Yazid (126 A.H.). On taking into consideration the date of Ibn Sirin's death (110 A.H.), Schacht regards the remark attributed to him as spurious. But his interpretation of the term *fitna* is arbitrary, and his opinion about the spuriousness of the statement made by Ibn Sirin is unwarranted. Prof. Robson has questioned Schacht's opinion, and remarks that it is during the middle of the first century of Islam and one could first expect anything like an *Isnad*.<sup>22</sup>

It is difficult to assign with certainty a definite period to the first appearance of *Isnad* in *Hadith*. But there is no doubt that the period fixed for it by Horovitz, and the one suggested by Robson, are very near to what is claimed by the early Traditionists. Ibn Sirin is reported to have said that at first, people did not enquire about the *Isnad*, but that after the Disturbance (*Fitna*), they began to ask for it. The 'Disturbance' in his remark is claimed by Muslims to refer to the civil war between 'Ali and Mu'awiya which began in the year 35 A.H. 'Ali himself is reported to have advised the students of *Hadith*: "When you write a tradition, write it with the *Isnad*."<sup>23</sup> Abu Hind 'Abd al-Rahman, a Companion (who must have died before the end of the first century of the Hijra), used to warn his students with the show of a stick, about failing to give the *Isnad* while reciting a tradition.<sup>24</sup> From these facts and from the great caution of the important early Companions, it may legitimately be inferred that the system of *Isnad* (being applied to tradition by the middle of the first century of the Hijra) was considered to be a necessary part of it (before the century ended).

Be this as it may, there is no doubt that, having taken it up, the Muslims came to consider the *Isnad* as an indispensable part of traditions, developed it a great deal, gave it a firm foundation — by introducing to it the chronological method and collecting the biographies of the transmitters (which served as a basis for the criticism of their narrations), and by establishing various principles for determining the value of its different classes. The Indians, so far as it is known, never made any attempt towards the scientific treatment of the *Isnad*, nor are they known to have developed the chronological method. In the early literature of the Jews also, there is no idea of the chronological method, which rendered their early *Isnads* valueless. "In the Talmudic literature," says Prof. Horovitz, "there is no idea of chronological method, and the oldest extant work attempting such arrangement was composed after 885 A.D.—more than a century later than the earliest Islamic work on *Isnad*-critique." "From this fact," he continues, "and from the fact that the important Jewish works (of this period) had been composed in the Islamic dominions, it may be inferred that the historical interest (of the Jews) was due to the Islamic influence."<sup>25</sup>

The Muslims not only gave a scientific form and basis to the system of *Isnad*, but also tried to make a comparative study of the various *Isnads* used in *Hadith* literature with a view to establishing their relative value. It is said that Ahmad b. Hanbal, Ibn Ma'in and Ibn al-Madini once assembled together with some other traditionists and discussed the most reliable *Isnad*. One of them said that the best *Isnad* was Shu'ba-Qatada-Sa'id-'Amir-Umm Salma. 'Ali b. al-Madini held that the best one was Ibn 'Aun-Muhammad-'Ubayada-'Ali. Ahmad b. Hanbal was of the opinion that the best *Isnad* was al-Zuhri-Salim-'Abd Allah b. 'Umar.<sup>26</sup> Al-Bukhari, however, was of the opinion that the best *Isnad* was Malik-Nafi'-Ibn 'Umar. To this *Isnad* the later Traditionists have added the names of al-Shafi'i and Ahmad b. Hanbal, making it one long chain from Ahmad to Ibn 'Umar. They gave it

the title of 'the golden chain'.<sup>27</sup> This chain, however, is rare in *Hadith* literature. In the whole of the *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal, in spite of its large size, there are not to be found (says Suyuti)<sup>28</sup> more than four traditions with this *Isnad*.

Prof. Schacht has questioned the authenticity of many of these *Isnads* also. He criticises 'the golden chain' on the grounds that Malik, being too young at the time of Nafi's death, could not have heard from the latter, and, secondly, that it is a family *Isnad* which (according to Schacht) is open to doubt.<sup>29</sup> But Schacht's arguments are open to serious criticism, because Malik was (according to Schacht himself)<sup>30</sup> about 23 years of age at the time of Nafi's death, and was therefore quite in a position to hear from him. As for the spuriousness of the family *Isnads* in general, that is only a matter of opinion.

Ibn Ma'in considered 'Ubayd Allah-Ibn 'Umar-Qasim-'A'ishah to be to be the best *Isnad*, and called it a 'chain of pure gold'.<sup>31</sup> Many other Traditionists have selected certain other chains as the most reliable. But the considered opinion of the later Traditionists in general is that it is impossible to call any particular *Isnad* the best one in the whole of *Hadith* literature. The judgement of the various authorities about it, therefore, must refer to the traditions accepted on the authority of a particular Companion or Follower or to the Traditionists of a particular place.<sup>32</sup> Some of the Traditionists, however, have also tried to point out the weakest *Isnad*. They hold that Marwan-Kalbi-Abu Salih-Ibn 'Abbas is the weakest one, and they call it a 'false' *Isnad*.<sup>33</sup>

Having been introduced into *Hadith*, the system of *Isnad* was not only continued for more than four centuries in the narration of every individual tradition, but was also applied to the books on traditions and on connected subjects since the time of their compilation. Every teacher of every book on *Hadith* or on a subject connected with it at every period in the history of *Hadith* literature gave (in order to guard against forgery of the books or parts of the books) his students the names of the teachers through whom he had

received it from its original author, each of them stating that he had read the whole or a part of it (which had to be specified) with his own teacher. The certificates of student's competency to teach a book on *Hadith* testify to their having read it with accredited teachers, and give the names of these teachers and of their teachers' teachers, going right back in sequence to the original author.

The practice of giving the *Isnad* of the books, to which great importance was attached by the Muslim Traditionists (who call it the 'bases' of a book), must have been introduced as early as the time when the books on traditions and connected subjects were compiled. Dr. Salah al-Din al-Munajjid has traced it back to the fourth century, and has given an example of it.<sup>34</sup> Here are a few other examples belonging to an earlier period than that quoted by al-Munajjid :—

1. a copy of a collection of *Ahadith* (said to be *Sahih Muslim*, part xiii) dated 368 A.H., and preserved in the Municipal Library, Alexandria (No. 836B);
2. a copy of *Kitab Gharib al-Hadith* by Abu 'Ubayd al-Qasim b. Sallam (154/770-223/837) which was copied at Damascus in 319 A.H., and the reading of which has been traced back to the author in whose presence the original manuscript was read—a fact recorded on the authority of Abu Sulayman Muhammad b. Mansur al-Balkhi.<sup>35</sup>
3. the most important of all such manuscripts is the fragment of a book on *Maghazi* by Wahb b. Munabbih. It is preserved in the Schott-Reinhardt Papyri, and has been described by C. H. Becker (*Papyri Schott-Reinhardt I*, Heidelberg, 1906)<sup>36</sup> It is dated Dhu' al-Qa'da 229/July 844, and bears at the top its *Isnad* going right back to its author.

The practice of giving the *Isnad* was certainly useful and essential for maintaining the authenticity of a book in an age when printing was not known, and when the copies of a



book consisted only of manuscripts made by individual persons who could make changes and commit forgeries in the works of authors of established reputation. But in modern times, with the appearance of the printing press and the multiplicity of copies and editions, it has been rendered needless and useless. But human nature is conservative. The old orthodox institutions still persist in it. No scholar, however competent, is supposed to have a right to teach a book on *Hadith* for which he has not received the necessary permission from a competent teacher. And competency consists only in receiving permission from a teacher who possesses similar permission from his own teacher. As a matter of fact, the whole system of teaching, particularly of *Hadith*, in India and (so far as I know in the whole Islamic world has been reduced to mere formality. Very few of the teachers possess any knowledge of the *Asma' al-Rijal*—a subject so essential for a study of *Hadith*.

According to the Traditionists, the *Isnad* of books had to be put down on their manuscripts also. They held that it was advisable for the students to write on their manuscripts of a book, after *Bismillah*, the names of their teachers together with their *kunya* and *nisba*, and the names of the teachers of their teachers right up to the author of the book himself. Above the *Bismillah*, or on the first page of a manuscript, or at any other prominent part of it, certain information should be put down : the list of the other students who read the book in the same class together with the owner of the manuscripts, and the places and the times or dates where and when the various parts of it were read by them. The names of all the students who attended the lectures with the teacher should also be written on the margin of the manuscript.<sup>37</sup>

These notes about the teachers, the place and dates of lectures and the names of students are found in a large number of the manuscripts on our subject which are still preserved in many of the important libraries in the East and in the West. The manuscripts respectively of the *Musnad* of

Abu Da'ud al-Tayalisi,<sup>38</sup> of the *Sunan* of al-Darimi,<sup>39</sup> of *al-Mashi-khat ma' al-Takhrij*<sup>40</sup>, of the *Kitab al-Kifaya*,<sup>41</sup> of the four volumes of the *Ta'rikh Dimashq*,<sup>42</sup> and of many other works on our subject in the O. P. Library of Bankipur; and the manuscript of the *Sunan* of Abu Da'ud<sup>43</sup> in the State Library of Berlin, are only a few instances of them. A large number of other manuscripts of this type may be easily traced in the catalogues of the various important libraries<sup>44</sup>. Of course, there are also manuscripts which contain only a few or none of the detailed notes mentioned above. These are defective manuscripts from which the parts containing the above notes have been lost, or are such as had been copied by common scribes for the use of laymen, not specialists in the subject. This practice of making a note of the above particulars on the colophons or margins of manuscripts appears to have been in vogue among the Traditionists since the second century of the Hijra. Hafs b. Ghiyath (d. 194/809), the well-known judge, is said to have decided a case on its basis. Fudayl b. 'Iyad (d. 187/802) is said to have forbidden the Traditionists to withhold the certificate of a student from him. Al-Zuhri (d. 124/741), the famous Traditionist, is also stated to have expressed the same view.<sup>45</sup>

So far as I have been able to investigate the matter, the manuscripts of the works on *Hadith* and connected subjects are almost unique in supplying us with all these interesting details which are of immense utility in determining the genuineness of these records of the past, just as Islamic traditions are unique in the thorough and scientific use of the system of giving the chain of transmitters. The Greek, the Latin, the Hebrew and the Syriac manuscripts, so far as I can judge by the perusal of their catalogues, seldom if ever supply us with these materials. The Indian manuscripts in certain cases contain a long list of teachers through whom they have been received. But they never give us the other details which we have described, and which are found in the manuscripts on our subjects.

These particulars, found on the colophons or margin of

a manuscript, are of immense importance to a modern scholar. They prove of great help in determining its genuineness and authenticity. In order to determine it without such data, one has to take the aid of external materials which are seldom of such value as the internal evidence in a manuscript itself. About the Greek manuscripts, for example, it is almost impossible to affirm with complete certainty that a particular manuscript is a completely genuine copy of a book composed by an author thousands of years ago.

The system of *Isnad*, however, being introduced into Arabic literature in connection with individual traditions and their collections, was extended by the Arabic authors to many other branches of it—i.e. geography, history, fiction, etc.<sup>46</sup> "There are works," says Prof. Margoliouth, "of which the subject-matter is so frivolous that one marvels at the trouble taken by the author to record the name of each transmitter and the date and place at which he heard the narrative; one example is the *Masari' al-Ushshaq* of al-Sarraji, a collection of cases in which men and women are supposed to have died of love, where the author records with minute accuracy the date at which he heard the story and gives similar details of the transmitters."<sup>47</sup>

In the use of the *isnad*, therefore, Arabic literature is certainly unique. Referring to its use in Arabic historical works, Hitti says: "This form of historic composition is unique in the case of the Arabic historiography—namely, to go back to the source and trace the line of authorities."<sup>48</sup>

### 3. THE PART PLAYED BY WOMEN IN THE TRANSMISSION AND CULTIVATION OF HADITH AND HADITH LITERATURE

There are few sciences in the evolution and cultivation of which women have taken an important part side by side with the men. The science of *Hadith* is an outstanding exception in this respect. Since the earliest history of Islam, the women-Traditionists had been taking a prominent part in the preservation and cultivation of *Hadith*, and at every

stage in the development of *Hadith* literature, they took a keen and lively interest in it. At every period in its history, there were numerous eminent women-Traditionists before whom many of their prominent brethren bowed down with reverence and respect. Short biographical notices of many of them are found in many works on the *Asma' al-Rijal*, the last parts of which generally deal with the women-traditionists.

During the life-time of the Prophet, many of the women had been not only the cause of the evolution of many traditions, but also their transmitters to their brethren in faith. After the Prophet's death, many women Companions—particularly, his wives—were looked upon as important custodians of 'knowledge', and were approached for instruction in the subject by its enthusiastic students, to whom they readily opened the rich store which they had gathered in the company of their holy Prophet and guide. The names of Hafsa, Umm Habiba, Maymuna, Umm Salma and 'A'ishah are familiar to every student of *Hadith* as some of its earliest transmitters.<sup>49</sup> In particular, 'A'ishah is one of the most important figures in the whole history of *Hadith* literature—not only as one of the earliest reporters of the largest number of *Ahadith*, but also as one of the most careful interpreters of them.<sup>50</sup>

Likewise, in the next following period—the period of the Followers—women held important positions as Traditionists. Hafsa, the daughter of Ibn Sirin,<sup>51</sup> Umm al-Darda' the younger (d. 81 A.H.), and 'Amra, the daughter of 'Abd al-Rahman, are only a few of the women-Traditionists of this period. Umm al-Darda' was held by Iyas b. Mu'awiya, an important Traditionist of the time and a judge of recognized ability and merit, to be superior to all the Traditionists of this period—including the celebrated masters of *Hadith* like al-Hasan and Ibn Sirin.<sup>52</sup> 'Amra was considered to be a great authority on the traditions related by 'A'ishah. Among her students, Abu Bakr b. Hazm (the celebrated judge of Madinah) was ordered by the Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz to write down all the traditions known to her.<sup>53</sup>

After them, 'Abidah al-Madaniyah, 'Abda the daughter of Bishr, Umm 'Umar al-Thaqafiyyah, Zaynab the granddaughter of 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah b. al-'Abbas, Nafisah the daughter of Hasan b. Ziyad, Khadija Umm Muhammad, 'Abda the daughter of 'Abd Al-Rahman, and several other members of the fair sex excelled in and delivered lectures on our subject. Some of them—rising from humble origins, or descending from high families—also acquired a mastery of this subject. For example, 'Abida who was a slave girl of Muhammad b. Yazid, had learnt a good deal of traditions with the teachers in Madinah. She was given by her master to Habib Dahhun, the great Traditionist of Spain, when he visited the holy city in connection with his pilgrimage. Dahhun was greatly impressed by her learning, took her as his wife, and brought her to Andalusia. It is said that she related 10,000 traditions on the authority of her Madinite teachers.<sup>54</sup> Zaynab (d. 142/759), the daughter of Sulayman, was a princess by birth. Her father was a cousin of al-Saffah, the founder of the Abbasid dynasty, and had been a governor of Basra, Oman and Bahrayn (during the caliphate of al-Mansur).<sup>55</sup> Zaynab, however, having acquired a mastery of *Hadith*, was considered one of the distinguished women-Traditionists of her time, and related traditions to several important men Traditionists.<sup>56</sup>

This partnership of women with men in the cultivation of *Hadith* continued throughout its history. From the earliest times, all the important compilers of traditions received many of them from their women *shuyukh*. Every important collection of traditions contains the names of many women as immediate authorities of the author. Moreover, after the compilation of the various collections of traditions, the women Traditionists having acquired a mastery of many of these works, delivered lectures on them, which were attended by a large number of students (men as well as women), and many important men Traditionists sat at their feet and secured their certificates from them.

In the fourth century, Fatima (d. 312/924), the daughter of 'Abd al-Rahman, and known as Sufiyah (Mystic) on account of her dress and self-denial; Fatimah the granddaughter of Abu Da'ud (the compiler of the well known *Sunan* work); Amt al-Wahid (d. 377/987), the daughter of al-Muhamili, the celebrated jurist; Umm al-Fath Amat al-Salam (d. 390/999) the daughter of Abu Bakr Ahmad (d. 350/961), the judge; Jumu'a, the daughter of Ahmad, and some other women acquired excellence in traditions, and delivered lectures on the subject which were attended by a good many students.<sup>57</sup>

In the fifth and sixth centuries of the Hijra, several women gained a reputation as Traditionists. Fatima, the daughter of the well-known mystic Hasan b. 'Ali al-Daqqaq, and wife of the famous Muslim divine, Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri, was celebrated not only for her mastery of calligraphy, but also for her mastery of traditions and for the high standard of *Isnad* she had for them.<sup>58</sup> Karimah al-Marwaziyah (d. 463/1070), the daughter of Ahmad, was considered to be the best authority on the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari in her time. Abu Dhar of Hirat, one of the greatest Traditionists of the time, attached great importance to her authority, and advised the students of *Hadith* to read the great *Sahih* with her, because she had received it with the *Isnad* of Haytham. As a great woman Traditionist, she is reported to have related traditions to several important Muslim divines.<sup>59</sup> "As a matter of fact," writes Goldziher, "her name occurs with extraordinary frequency in the *Ijazas* (certificates granted to students) for narrating the text of the book (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)."<sup>60</sup> It occurs in the *Ijaza* of Abu al-Mahasin; and the book was also read with her by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (the celebrated biographer of the eminent men of Baghdad)<sup>61</sup> and al-Humaydi (428-488 A.H.), the famous Traditionist of Andalusia.<sup>62</sup>

Not only Karimah, but several women Traditionists, (according to Goldziher) "took a very prominent part in the history of the transmission of the *Sahih*."<sup>63</sup> Among these fair

transmitters of the text of the *Sahih*, Fatimah (d. 539/1144), the daughter of Muhammad; Shuhda (d. 574/1178), the daughter of Ahmad b. al-Faraj; Sitt al-Wuzara' (d. 716/1316), the daughter of 'Umar, were especially celebrated.<sup>64</sup> Fatimah narrated the book on the authority of the great Traditionist, Sa'id al-'Ayyar; and she was given by the Traditionists the proud title of *Musnidah Isbahan* (the great authority in Isfahan). Shuhda was a celebrated calligrapher and a Traditionist of great reputation. She has been described by the biographers as "the calligrapher, the great authority of *Hadith*, and the pride of womanhood". Her great grandfather was a dealer in needles, and was, therefore, known as al-Ibri. But her father, Abu Nasr (d. 506/1112), had acquired a taste for *Hadith*, and studied them with several masters of the subject.<sup>65</sup> He gave his daughter a sound education in traditions (which she also studied with many competent teachers of established reputation), and gave her in marriage to 'Ali who had some literary taste, and at a later period he became a boon companion of the Caliph al-Muqtafi; he founded a college and a monastery, and made them large endowments. His wife, Shuhda, however, gained a reputation as a Traditionist, and was noted for her high standard of *Isnad*.<sup>66</sup> Her lectures on *Sahih al-Bukhari* and other works on *Hadith* were attended by a large crowd of students; and on account of her great reputation, some people even falsely claimed to have been her disciples.<sup>67</sup> Again, Sitt al-Wuzara' was known as the *Musnidah* of her time, and she delivered lectures (on *Sahih al-Bukhari* and other works) in Egypt and at Damascus.<sup>68</sup> Lectures on the *Sahih* were also delivered by Umm al-Khayr Amat al-Khaliq (811-911/1408-1505) who was the last great authority of the school of the Hijaz.<sup>69</sup> 'A'ishah, the daughter of Abd al-Hadi, also lectured on the great book.<sup>70</sup>

The study of the *Ijazas* of the Traditionists, of the works on the *Asma' al-Rijal*, and of the colophons of the manuscripts of the works of *Hadith*, shows that the women Traditionists of various periods read out to their students not only the

*Sahih* of al-Bukhari, but also many other works on the subject. Umm al-Khayr Fatimah (d. 532/1137) the daughter of 'Ali, and Fatimah al-Shahrzuriyah delivered lectures on the *Sahih* of Muslim.<sup>71</sup> Fatimah al-Jauzdaniyah (d. 524/1129) narrated to her students the three *Mu'jams* of al-Tabarani.<sup>72</sup> Zaynab of Harran (d. 688/1289), whose lectures attracted a large crowd of students, read with them the *Musnad* of Ahmad b. Hanbal, the largest known collection of traditions.<sup>73</sup> Juwayriyah, (d. 783/1381) the daughter of 'Umar, and Zaynab, (d. 722/1322) the daughter of Ahmad b. 'Umar, who had travelled widely in pursuit of Hadith and delivered lectures in Egypt as well as at Madinah, narrated to her students the collections of al-Darimi and of 'Abd b. Humayd; and students travelled from far and wide in order to attend her discourses.<sup>74</sup> Zaynab (d. 740/1339) the daughter of Ahmad (generally known as Kamal) had acquired a camel load of diplomas; she delivered lectures on the *Musnad* of Abu Hanifah, the *Shama'il* of al-Tirmidhi, and on the *Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar* of al-Tahawi (the last of which she had read with another woman Traditionist, 'Ajibah, the daughter of Abu Bakr).<sup>75</sup> "On her authority is based," says Goldziher, "the authenticity of the Gotha manuscript...in which occur the names of numerous other women who studied it."<sup>76</sup> With her and various other women, the great traveller, Ibn Battuta, studied traditions during his stay at Damascus.<sup>77</sup> The famous biographer of the celebrated men of Damascus, Ibn al-'Asakir who had received instruction in *Hadith* from more than 1200 men and from 80 women Traditionists, obtained the *Ijaza* of Zaynab (the daughter of 'Abd al-Rahman) for the *Muwatta* of Malik.<sup>78</sup> Jalal al-Din Suyuti read the *Risalah* of al-Shafi'i with Hajar, the daughter of Muhammad.<sup>79</sup> 'Afif al-Din Junayd, a Traditionist of the ninth century A.H., read the *Sunan* of al-Darimi with Fatimah, the daughter of Ahmad b. Qasim.<sup>80</sup>

In the seventh century of the Hijra also, many women Traditionists made their marks as teachers of *Hadith*. Some of them have already been mentioned. Some others, who



were no less prominent, are Zaynab bint al-Sha'ri (524-615/1129-1218); Karima (d. 641/1218); Safiyah the daughter of 'Abd al-Wahhab; and Zaynab (d. 688/1289) the daughter of al-Makki.

Zaynab bint al-Sha'ri studied *Hadith* with several important Traditionists; she delivered lectures to many students, some of whom gained a great reputation as literary men—e.g. Ibn Khallikan, the author of the well-known biographical dictionary, *Wafayat al-A'yan*.<sup>81</sup> Karimah is described by the biographers as the authority of Syria (*Musnidat al-Sha'm*). She delivered lectures on many works on *Hadith* on the authority of numerous masters.<sup>82</sup> Zaynab, the daughter of al-Makki, gained a great reputation as a traditionist, and a large crowd of students flocked to her learned discourses.

The eighth and ninth centuries were extremely rich in women Traditionists. A large number of those of the eighth century are mentioned by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in his biographical dictionary of the prominent men and women of this period, *al-Durar al-Kaminah* (on which is mainly based the sixth volume of Ibn 'Imad's *Shadharat al-Dhahab*, a large biographical dictionary of the prominent Traditionists from the first to the tenth centuries of the Hijra). Various manuscripts of the *Durar* are preserved in different libraries in the East and in the West; and it has been published by the Da'-irat al-Ma'arif, Hyderabad (India). In this work Ibn Hajar has given short biographical notices of about 170 prominent women of the eighth century, most of whom are Traditionists, and with many of whom the author himself had studied. Goldziher was struck by the large number of women to whom the author had devoted his various articles.<sup>83</sup> Some of these women are recognised as the best Traditionists of the period. For example, Juwayriyah, the daughter of Ahmad, to whom we have already referred, studied various works on traditions with many important Traditionists of the time. These included men as well as women. Having mastered the subject, she delivered lectures to many students. "Some

of my teachers," says Ibn Hajar, "and many of my contemporaries attended her discourses."<sup>84</sup> 'A'ishah (723-816 A.H.), the daughter of 'Abd al-Hadi, with whom Ibn Hajar studied for a considerable time, was considered to be the best Traditionist of her time. A large number of students undertook long journeys in order to attend her discourses.<sup>85</sup> Sitt al-'Arab (d. 760/1358) had been the teacher of the well-known Traditionist, al-'Iraqi (d. 742/1341), and of al-Haythami and many others who derived a good deal of their knowledge from her. Her student, al-'Iraqi, also presented his son to her for instruction.<sup>86</sup> Daqqa (d. 746/1345), the daughter of Murshid, a celebrated woman Traditionist of the time, had received instruction from numerous women Traditionists. One of her teachers was the daughter of Ahmad, to whom we have already referred. Many other Traditionists belonging to the eighth century have been mentioned by Ibn Hajar and 'Abd al-Ha'iy 'Imad al-Din, to whose works reference may be made by those who may be interested in the subject.

Furthermore, of the women Traditionists of the ninth century, many have been mentioned by Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sakhawi (830-897/1427-1492) in his *al-Dau' al Lami'*, in which he has collected together the biographical notices of the eminent persons of the period (ninth century A.H.). It has been summarized by 'Abd al-Salam and by 'Umar b. al-Shamma',<sup>87</sup> and a defective manuscript of the work of the latter is preserved in the O.P. Library of Patna.<sup>88</sup> 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Umar b. Fahd (812-871/1409-1466) also, in his *Mu'jam al-Shuyukh* (compiled in 861 A.H., and devoted to the biographical notices of more than 1100 teachers of the author) has mentioned more than 130 women Traditionists who lived during this period, and with whom he had studied.<sup>89</sup> All of them had gained some reputation as Traditionists. Some of them were recognized to be among the best Traditionists of their time, and some of their students have been acknowledged to be among the most celebrated custodians of *Hadith* in the next generation. Umm Hani Maryam (778-871/1376-1466), the daughter of Fakhr al-Din

Muhammad, for example, having got the Qur'an by heart in her childhood, and having learnt the various Islamic sciences in vogue at the time, pursued the study of *Hadith* with the best Traditionists of her age at Mecca and Cairo. She was celebrated for her mastery of calligraphy, for her command of the Arabic language, for her natural aptitude for poetry, and for her mastery of traditions. She was noted for her piety and strict observance of religious duties. She frequently fasted, and performed the pilgrimage thirteen times. Her son was a noted Muslim scholar of the tenth century; he had great respect for her, and constantly attended her in the later part of her life. She regularly delivered lectures on *Hadith*, and gave *Ijazas* to many scholars. Ibn Fahd read with her a few works on the subject.<sup>90</sup> Ba'i Khatun (d. 864/1459), the daughter of Abu al-Hasan, having studied traditions with Abu Bakr al-Mizzi (the elder and the younger) and with numerous other Traditionists, and having secured the *Ijazas* of a large number of masters of *Hadith* (both men and women), delivered lectures on the subject in Syria and Egypt. She is said to have been fond of teaching.<sup>91</sup> 'A'ishah (760-842/1358-1438), the daughter of Ibrahim, (generally known as Ibnat al-Shara'ih) studied numerous traditions at Cairo, Damascus and other places. She delivered lectures on the subject, which were attended by many recognized scholars.<sup>92</sup> Umm al-Khayr Sa'ida of Mecca (d. 850/1446) received instruction in *Hadith* from numerous Traditionists from far flung places, and gained a reputation as an authority on traditions.<sup>93</sup>

So far as may be gathered from the available sources on the subject, the interest of women in traditions appears to have declined considerably from the tenth century of the Hijra. The *al-Nur al-Safir* of 'Aydarusi, the *Khulasat al-Akhbar* of al-Muhibbi, and the *al-Suhub al-Wabilah* of Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Najdi (i.e. biographical dictionaries of the eminent persons of the tenth, the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Hijra respectively) contain the names of hardly more than a dozen eminent women Traditionists. But

it would be wrong to conclude that since the tenth century, the women entirely lost interest in our subject. Some women Traditionists, who had gained a reputation in the ninth century, lived till about the first quarter of the tenth century, and they continued their services to our subject. Asma' (d. 904/1498), the daughter of Kamal al-Din Musa, wielded great influence with the Sultans and their officials, to whom she often made recommendations, which were always accepted by them. She delivered lectures on *Hadith* and trained women in various Islamic sciences.<sup>94</sup> 'A'ishah (d. 906/1500), the daughter of Muhammad b. Ahmad, and wife of Muslih al-Din (the judge), taught traditions to many students, including Ibn Tulun (890-955/1485-1514). Later on, she was appointed as a professor in the Salihyya College in Damascus.<sup>95</sup> Fatimah (870-925/1465-1519), the daughter of Yusuf of Aleppo, was known as one of the excellent scholars of her time.<sup>96</sup> Umm al-Khayr granted *Ijaza* to one of the pilgrims of Mecca in the year 938/1531.<sup>97</sup>

The last important woman Traditionist known to us was Fatimah al-Fudayliyyah, who is also known as al-Shaykhah al-Fudayliyyah. She was born before the end of the twelfth century, acquired excellence in the art of calligraphy and in the various Islamic sciences. She copied and collected a large number of books. She had a special interest in *Hadith*, read a good deal on the subject, received the diplomas of a good many learned men, and acquired a good reputation as a Traditionist. Towards the end of her life, she went to Mecca, where she settled down and founded a rich public library. Here she attracted many eminent Traditionists, who attended her lectures and received certificates from her. Among them, Shaykh 'Umar al-Hanafi and Shaykh Muhammad Salih al-Shafi'i may be particularly mentioned. She died in 1247/1831.<sup>98</sup>

These fair Traditionist of Islam, as one may see from what has been said, did not confine their activities to a personal study of traditions or to the private coaching of a few individuals in it, but also took their seats as students

as well as teachers in public educational institutions—side by side with their brethren. They attended general classes jointly with the men Traditionists, and in turn delivered lectures to large classes, which were attended by men as well as women students. The colophons of many manuscripts, which are still preserved in many libraries, show them both as students attending large general classes, and also as teachers delivering regular courses of lectures to them. The certificate on the folios 238-40 of the *al-Mashikhat ma'al-Takhrij* of Ibn al-Bukhari shows that numerous women attended a regular course of eleven lectures which was delivered to a large class consisting of more than 500 students (whose names are mentioned in the certificate) in the Jami' 'Umar at Damascus in the year 687/1288.<sup>99</sup> Another certificate on folio 40 of the same manuscript shows that many female students (whose names are mentioned) attended another course of six lectures on the book, which was delivered by Ibn al-Sairafi to a class of more than 200 students at Aleppo in the year 736/1336.<sup>100</sup> And a certificate on folio 250 of the same manuscript shows that a celebrated woman Traditionist, Umm 'Abd Allah, delivered a course of five lectures on the book to a class of more than 50 students, including both men and women, at Damascus in the year 837/1433.<sup>101</sup> Various notes on the manuscript of the *Kitab al-Kifaya* of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, and of a collection of various treatises on *Hadith*, show Ni'ma the daughter of 'Ali; Umm Ahmad Zaynab, the daughter of al-Makki, and other women Traditionists delivering lectures on either of the two books, sometimes independently, and sometimes jointly with some celebrated men Traditionists, in some important educational institutions like Madrasah 'Aziziyah and Madrasah Diya'iyah, to regular classes of students, some of which were attended (among others) by Ahmad, a son of the famous general Salah al-Din. These are only a few instances of the active service of women to the cultivation of *Hadith* literature.<sup>102</sup>

## 4. THE INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE TRADITIONISTS

Another important feature of *Hadith* literature is its development by the religious-minded Muslim doctors without any help or encouragement from either the Umayyad or the Abbasid *caliphs*. While almost all Arabic scientific literature developed under the encouraging and helpful influence of the caliphs and their courtiers, and almost every worker in the field of the Arabian sciences basked in the sunshine of their generosity, the devotees of *Hadith* were generally either ill-treated by those who reigned in the name of the Islamic religion, or in their pious stoicism they rejected and refused favours if they were ever offered to them. None of the compilers of the important and authoritative collections of *Hadith* ever received any post or purse or privilege from the caliphs or their officials. Almost the whole of the important and authoritative part of *Hadith* literature developed as a result of the spontaneous religious enthusiasm of the Muslims—in spite of the caliphs and their officials.

Throughout the reign of the Umayyads (with the exception of the religious reign of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz, who helped the collection and compilation of *Ahadith* in various ways), the strict Traditionists had been either completely opposed or neutral to the state. 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amar, 'abd Allah b. 'Abbas, Muhammad b. Sirin, Sa'id b. al-Musaiyyib, al-Hasan of Basra, Sufyan al-Thauri and other Traditionists (who are considered to be the pillars of the science of *Hadith*) had been entirely indifferent to the Umayyad rulers. "Since the death of Sa'id," says Goldziher, "the pious Traditionists disliked the state of affairs under this rule. They became indifferent to the tyrannical government, and passively resisted it." "The official party," he adds, "therefore despised and hated them."<sup>103</sup> These pious Traditionists believed and declared that the association with the rulers was a source of sin.<sup>104</sup>

But there were some moderate-minded Traditionists who

enjoyed the patronage of the Umayyad princes, and some of them did not consider it to be a sin to help the rulers of the day. But they did not overstep the limits of co-operation with their patrons, nor did they forge traditions in their favour. Among them may be included the Traditionists like 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, Raja' b. Hayawa and Muhammad b. Muslim al-Zuhri. They enjoyed the patronage of the caliphs.<sup>105</sup> But, at the same time, they kept up the purity and prestige of knowledge. The close association of some of them with the caliphs was disliked and criticised by certain Traditionists, but their veracity and reliability have never been questioned by any of them. Among the modern European Orientalists also, Horovitz (having referred to the arguments and conclusions of Goldziher, who considered 'al-Zuhri a forger of traditions in favour of the Umayyads)<sup>106</sup> says: "That he (al-Zuhri) invented *Hadith* in order to promote the interests of the Umayyads is, however, unacceptable."<sup>107</sup> As a matter of fact, al-Zuhri at times enraged some of the caliphs by quoting traditions against their interests; these he adhered to right to the end in spite of the fury of his patrons.<sup>108</sup> Some of the supporters of the Umayyads, however, overstepped the limits of proper co-operation. They used not only fair, but also foul means to further the interests of their patrons. Among them are included men like 'Awana b. al-Hakam and others who forged traditions in favour of the Umayyads, and tried to propagate the forged traditions among the people. But their foul deeds were denounced by the pious and strict Traditionists, and they were branded as forgers and liars. As such, therefore, they have left little mark on *hadith* literature.

The Abbasids were generous and benevolent caliphs, and during their reign, they tried by their outwardly religious appearance to conciliate the pious Muslims. Nevertheless, none of the important compilers of *Hadith* collections received, or even expected any help from them, and in fact, some of the Traditionists, like Malik b. Anas,<sup>110</sup> Ahmad b. Hanbal and others actually suffered under Abbasid rule<sup>111</sup> while others, like al-Bukhari, were troubled by their officials.<sup>112</sup> Of

course, there were some, like Muslim and others, who were simply indifferent to the benefit of the caliphs favour. The attitude of the various classes of Traditionist towards the caliphs continued then to be exactly the same as it had been under the Umayyads.<sup>109</sup> Despite these factors, throughout this period, all of the extant literature of *Hadith* evolved and ramified.

## 5. THE EXACTITUDE OF THE TRADITIONISTS

No other literature can compete with *Hadith* literature in the standard of exactitude maintained by its pious votaries. We have seen how all the various compilers of *Hadith* collections tried to reproduce exactly what they had learnt from their teachers. There certainly had been numerous forgers of *Hadith*. But they had little to do with *Hadith* literature. Those who were mainly responsible for its development tried sincerely to be as accurate as possible. Some were faithful only to the ideas without attaching much importance to the expressions. Others tried to be faithful to the words as well as to the ideas. They reproduced each word and letter, including the diacritical marks and the vowel points, without deviating in the least from what they had received. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi in the first few chapters of his *Kitab al-Kifaya* has shown how painstaking some of the Traditionists had been with regard to every word and letter in a *Hadith*.<sup>113</sup> Ibn 'Umar did not like to change the order of words in a sentence, even when it did not affect the meaning in the least. Malik b. Anas tried faithfully to reproduce each and every letter. Ibn Sirin did not approve of making corrections in a *Hadith*, even in those cases in which there was certainty of a mistake by the reporter.<sup>114</sup>

The care and precision of the leading Traditionists is further illustrated by the principles established by them about the methods of acquiring knowledge and the duties of its teachers and students. These principles have been discussed since the second century of the Hijra, and they are mentioned



in the various works on the *'Ulum al-Hadith* (the sciences of Tradition).

The first problem about the study of *Hadith* is that of the age at which it may be commenced. The Traditionists of Kufa have fixed the age of 20; those of Basra, the age of 10; and those of Syria, the age of 30. But according to the majority of the later Traditionists, the study of *Hadith* may be commenced at the age of 5.<sup>115</sup>

In any case, the study of *Hadith* should be preceded by that of Arabic grammar and language, so that the mistakes that arise from ignorance of them may be avoided.<sup>116</sup> 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak, the famous Traditionist, spent more money on learning Arabic language than on traditions. He attached more importance to the former than to the latter, and asked the students of *Hadith* to spend twice as long a time on learning Arabic grammar as on *Hadith*. Hammad b. Salama is said to have remarked that he who takes to *Hadith* without knowing grammar is like an ass which carries a sack without corn. Asma'i was of the opinion that he who studied *Hadith* without learning grammar was to be counted among the forgers.<sup>117</sup> Shu'ba and 'Abbas b. al-Mughira are also stated to have made similar remarks.<sup>118</sup> Sibwayh, the grammarian, took to the study of grammar, because a mistake he had made in a *Hadith* was pointed out to him by Hammad b. Salama.<sup>119</sup>

Having learnt the preliminaries, the student should purge his mind of all worldly considerations. He should develop a good character, seek the help of God in his efforts, and strain every nerve in the acquisition of knowledge. He should begin his study with the best teachers of his town, and carry it on by making journeys to the rest of the literary world and by acquiring what is possessed by the various *Shuyukh* (masters of the subject). But he should not run after the mere number of *Ahadith*. He should hear and write them down, should understand them, and should know their genuineness or weakness, their theological importance and implications, the proper significance of the words used in them, and the

character of those through whom they have been handed down.

Of the actual process of learning *Hadith*, the Traditionists have mentioned the following eight forms:—

1. *al-Sama'*. The student may attend the lectures of a Traditionist, which may be in the form of simple narration of traditions or accompanied by dictation of the same, either from memory or from a book.

2. *al-Qira'at*. One may read to a Traditionist the traditions which have been narrated or compiled by him. Or one may hear the traditions while they are recited by another student to a Traditionist (the teacher) — provided he is attentive to what is recited, or compares his own copy with what is recited.

3. *al-Ijaza*. To obtain the permission of a Traditionist to narrate to others the traditions compiled by him. This may be granted in different ways, some of which are recognized by the majority as valid, and some of which are rejected.

4. *al-Munawala*. To obtain the compilation of a Traditionist together with his permission to narrate its contents to others (which is recognized as valid by the majority of the Traditionists), or without his permission to report the contents (which is declared as invalid by the majority).

5. *al-Mukatabah*. To receive by correspondence certain traditions from a Traditionist — either with or without his permission to narrate them to others.

6. *I'lam al-Rawi*. The declaration of a Traditionist to a student that he (the Traditionist) received such and such traditions or book from such and such an authority—without giving him (the student) permission to narrate them (or it).

7. *al-Wasiyyah*. To come into possession of the works of a Traditionist by his will at the time of his death.

8. To find certain traditions in a book without receiving them from any recognized authority.<sup>120</sup>

The first two of these methods are recognized by the Traditionists as the best. The rest are declared as invalid by some, and as valid by others.

The student who gathers the knowledge of *Hadith* by any one or more of the various methods, is not recognized as a Traditionist, unless he combines together with it a knowledge of the life and character of the narrators and of the degrees of reliability of the various traditions and other connected matters. Such of them as combine all these and other qualities (to which reference has been made) are known as *al-Hafiz* or *al-Muhaddith*—according to the degree of perfection attained by them.<sup>121</sup>

Such students of *Hadith* as attain mastery of it as well as that of connected subjects may deliver lectures on the subject, between the age of 40 and 80, once or twice or thrice a week, for no other consideration than the propagation of knowledge. Before going to the lectures, they should take a bath, perform ablutions and dress cleanly. They should take their seat in a prominent and elevated place, and deliver lectures while they are standing. They should keep perfect order during their lectures, and appoint assistants who will repeat their words to such students as might not be able to follow the lectures clearly.

The lectures should be preceded by recitations from the Qur'an, praise of God, and prayers for His Prophet who is the source of knowledge. After this, the lecturer should recite and dictate traditions, narrating one tradition from each of his teachers, giving preference to the short ones which have theological or legal importance, stating their narrators and the method by which they were received from them, introducing them with expressions particularly suited for the traditions received by the different methods. If his teacher had read out the traditions to him, he should begin with the word *Haddathana* (he related to us) or *Akhbarana* (he informed us), etc. If he or any of his fellow-students read out the traditions in the presence of his teacher, he should begin with the words *qara'tu 'ala...* (I read out to ...) or *quri'a*

'alayhi w' ana' asma'u (it was read out to him while I listened). In the case of the *Ijaza*, he should begin by saying: "I found it in the hand-writing of such and such a person" or "I found it in his book" or "in his own hand-writing", etc.

The lectures may be delivered either from memory, if it be sufficiently strong, or from books, provided the manuscripts are written either by the lecturer himself, or by any person of reliable character; and provided further that the reliability of the manuscripts has been proved to the lecturer, with certainty. In case the lecturer finds any difference between the contents of the manuscript and what he remembers, or between his own version of a tradition and that of other Traditionists, he should point it out to his students. In case the lecturer narrates the traditions not *verbatim* but according to the ideas conveyed by them, he should be well versed in the subject matter—so that he may be certain that the change in expression will cause no change in the meaning. He should also add at the end of every *Hadith* such words as might show that the words used in it were his own. In case he finds any mistake in a *Hadith* which he has received, he should narrate it first according to his correction, and then point out also how it was reported to him. If he has received a tradition from more than one narrator, in different words conveying the same idea, he should narrate it, giving the name of every narrator and pointing out that the expressions used were those of such and such narrators. In case he received a part of a tradition from one narrator, and another part from another narrator, he should point it out to his students. If there was any negligence on the part of the lecturer when he received a tradition, which might have affected his knowledge, he should not fail to bring such negligence to the notice of his students. In short, it is a duty of the lecturer on *Hadith* to convey it to his students exactly as it was received by him, and to add his own comments on it, in such words as might not be mistaken for a part of the tradition. He is not allowed even to change the words *Rasul Allah* into *Nabi Allah* (which convey more less the same

idea). He should finish his discourse by relating instructive and attractive, historical, humorous stories exhorting his audience to piety, good manners and high character.<sup>122</sup>

The pious Traditionists, however, tried to maintain the care and exactitude which they showed in the acquisition and propagation of traditions, also in writing them down, and laid down definite principles with regard to it—so that no mistake might be committed by the writers and readers of *Hadith*.

Such students of traditions as write them down are required to use clear, distinct and bold letters, each letter being distinctly written, so that they may not be mistaken for other similar letters. The dots of the letters with points are to be properly placed, and those without them are to be made distinct with distinct additional signs (which are thoroughly discussed in works on '*Ulum al-Hadith*'). Special attention is to be paid to rare and archaic words and proper names, which in addition to the text are also to be noted on the margin in distinct, separate letters. Such expressions as 'Abd Allah should be written without a break in one and the same line. The various traditions are to be separated from one another by small circles in which dots may be put after the manuscript has been compared with its original copy. The genuineness of the genuine traditions, and the defects of the defective ones, are to be shown by special signs. If, for example, the chain of authority is broken in the case of a tradition, or if any part of a tradition contains any obvious or hidden defect, these parts should be marked in particular.

After the manuscript is completed, it should be carefully compared with the original; and all the mistakes of commission as well as of omission should be duly corrected. All the omissions should be put down on the right hand margin to which a line should be drawn from the word in the text after which the missing part should fall. The mistakes of commission should be either struck off or erased. But it is preferable to pen through them in such a way as to keep them legible, and also show them as struck off.

In the text of his manuscript, the writer should always follow a particular version of a book or traditions. The differences in other versions and the criticism may be noted distinctly on the margin.

Such students as write down traditions at the dictation of their teachers are required to be extremely careful and exact in their writings and in putting dots wherever they may be necessary. They are also required to put down in a prominent part of the manuscript the names of their teachers together with other particulars about them, the names of all the fellow students who attended these lectures, as well as the time and place where these lectures were delivered.<sup>123</sup>

All these particulars with regard to learning, teaching and writing down traditions have been treated and discussed by the Traditionists since the second century of the Hijra with exhaustive, minute details, which show the care and exactitude which they wanted to maintain at every stage of the propagation of *Hadith*.

*Hadith* literature, therefore, on account of its advanced system of *Isnad*, the prominent part taken by women in its cultivation, the unparalleled devotion of its votaries, and their care and exactitude, may be said to be unique.

### Notes

1. LMu, xxxvi.
2. IA, ii, pp.2-3, 83-84.
3. TR, p. 103.
4. See *supra*, pp. 58f.
5. AnIs,i, p. 30.
6. J. Horovitz, *Alter und Ursprung des Isnad, Der Islam*, viii, 1917, pp. 39-47.
7. JASB, 1924, pp. 404-405.
8. "The Isnad in Muslim Tradition", reprinted from the *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*, pp. 15-26.
9. ArH, p. 20.
10. *Der Islam*, loc. cit.
11. FfM, ii, p.p. 67-70
12. MUd, v. p. 88.
13. Mhb, book i, canto 1; cf. HIL, i, 323.

14. HIL, ii, p. 34, fn. 3.
15. CFT, iii, p. 163.
16. Anls, i, p. 31.
17. *Der Islam*, viii, p.p. 43-44.
18. IsC, i, p.p. 550-51.
19. OMJ, p. 163.
20. *Ibid.* p. 37..
21. OMJ, p. 36.
22. J. Robson, *op. cit.* on p. 164 (fn. 1) *above*, pp. p.p. 19-21.
23. ML, v, p. 454.
24. UGh. This fact has also been reported by Ibn Sa'd in the *Tabaqat*; but unfortunately, I cannot give the exact reference.
25. *Der Islam*, viii, p. 47.
26. TR, p.p. 20-21.
27. FM, p.p. 8-10.
28. TR, p. 20.
29. OMJ, p.p. 170, 176.
30. See his article on Malik b. Anas in Elss.
31. TA, p. 507.
32. TR, p.p. 22-23.
33. MSt, ii, p. 247, fn. 2.
34. "Ijazat al-Sama'fi al-Makhtutat al-Qadimah" in the *Journal of the Institute of Arabic Manuscripts*, vol. i, part 2, Cairo, November, 1955, pp. 232ff.
35. Prof. Ahmed Ates, *Corum ve yozgat kutuphanlerinden bazi muhim Arapca yazamlar*, Istanbul, 1959, pp. 3-4.
36. I am indebted to Prof. Otto Spies for a copy of p. 8 of Becker's article. For additional information, see "Wahb b. Munabbih", J. Horovitz, Els.
37. MIS, 81F; TR, p. 158; FM, 265.
38. OPC, v, 1; No. 241.
39. *Ibid.* No. 254.
40. *Ibid.* part 2, No. 322.
41. *Ibid.* No. 438.
42. *Ibid.* xii, No. 800.
43. Ahlwardt's *Catalogue*, ii, No. 246.
44. e.g. *Cat. Br. Mus.*, pp.79, 90, 96, etc.
45. MIS, 82.
46. Many Arabic MSS on subjects other than traditions, having some of the above-mentioned notes, are described by G. Vajda in his "Les certificats De Lecture Et De Transmission Dans Les Manuscrits Arabes De La Bibliotheque Nationale De Paris" (Paris, 1957). See pp. 37 ff.
47. ArH, 19.
48. OIS, intro., p. 3.
49. See *supra*, pp. 23, 31.
50. *Ibid.*
51. TIS, viii, p. 355.
52. TR, p. 215.
53. TIS, viii, p. 353.
54. NT, ii, p. 96
55. GT, xiv, p. 430
56. GT, xiv, p. 434 f.
57. TB, xiv, 441-44
58. ShD, v, p. 48; WA, No. 413. Fatima died in 480/1087.
59. NT, i, p. 876.
60. MSt, ii, p. 405, fn.

61. MUd, i, p. 247.
62. OPC, v, 1, pp. 98 f.
63. MSt, ii, p. 405.  
O.P. 146/19
64. ShD, iv, p.p. 123, 248.
65. KIA, x, 346.
66. WA, No. 295.
67. MSt, ii, p. 406.
68. ShD, vi, p. 40.
69. *Ibid*, viii, p. 14.
70. Il, p. 36.
71. ShD, iv, p. 100.
72. KI, p. 16.
73. KU, p. 28f.
74. ShD, vi, p. 56.
75. *Ibid*, 126; KI, p. 14, 18; QT, 73.
76. MSt, ii, 407.
77. Voyages d' Ibn Batoutah. Ed. C. Defremery, et al, Paris, 1843. p. 253.
78. MBn, v, 140 f.
79. MUd, 17 f.
80. OPC, v, 1, pp. 175 f.
81. WA, No. 250.
82. ShD, v, 213, 404.
83. MSt, ii, 406.
84. DK, i, No. 1472.
85. ShD, vii, p.p. 120 f.
86. *Ibid*, vi, p. 208.
87. GAL, Sup. 2, p. 34.
88. OPC, xii, No. 727.x
89. *Ibid*.
90. DL, xii, No. 980.
91. *Ibid*, No. 58.
92. *Ibid*, No. 450.
93. *Ibid*, No. 901.
94. NS, 49.
95. TbT, see OPC, xii, No. 665 ff.
96. *Ibid*.
97. MSt, ii, p. 407.
98. *al-Suhub al-Wabilah*, see OPC, xii, No. 785.
99. See Illustration No. 3(i)
100. *Ibid*, No. 3 (ii).
101. OPC, v, 2, p. 54.
102. *Ibid*, v, 2, pp. 155-159, 180-208. The Library possesses many other rare literary gems of great value. The Zahiriyah Library (Damascus) possesses several manuscripts copied by women. See 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Mayamani's article (pp. 1-14) in *al-Mabalih al-'Ilmiyah Da'irat al-Ma'arif*, Hyderabad (India); 1358 A.H.  
O.P. 146/20
103. MSt, ii, p. 31f.
104. JBI, i, p.p. 163-86
105. JBI, i, p.p. 163-86.
106. MSt, ii, p.p. 38-40.
107. IsC, ii, p. 48.
108. *Ibid*, p.p. 41-42.



109. See *Supra*, p. 154.
110. WA, No. 560.
111. See *supra*, p. 65 ff.
112. *Ibid*, p. 90.
113. KKi, OPC.
114. KKi.
115. MIS, p. 49.
116. TR, p. 164.
117. MUd, i, 17, 26.
118. TR, p. 164.
119. MUd, iv, p. 135.
120. MIS, 50-69; TR, p. 129-150; FM, p. 170-236.
121. TR, p. 4-8.
122. TR, p. 159-70.
123. MIS, p. 70-82; FM, p. 236-68; TR, p. 151-59.

## CHAPTER 7

### *The Sciences of Tradition*

(‘ULUM AL-HADITH)

We have seen that every *Hadith* consists of two parts: the *Isnad* (the chain of transmitters) and the *Matn* (text). Each of these two parts is of equal importance to a Traditionist. The latter, as a report of the sayings or doings of the Prophet, is basic to Islamic rituals and laws, while the former constitutes the credentials of the latter. The Traditionists, therefore, treat and consider the traditions with one and the same *Isnad* and different texts, as well as the traditions with one and the same text and different *Isnads*, as entirely independent traditions. A critical study of traditions, therefore, likewise consists (according to the Traditionists) of two parts: that of the *Isnad*, and that of the text.

In order to check the *Isnad*, it is necessary to know the life and the career as well as the character of the various persons who constitute the various links in the chains of the different *Isnads*. And in order to understand the exact significance of the text, and to test its genuineness, it is necessary to know the meaning of the various expressions used (some of which are rare and out of common use), and also to learn its relation to the text of the other traditions (some of which may be either corroborated or contradicted by it).

In connection with *Hadith* literature, therefore, there have been developed by the Muslims various other branches of literature which are summarized in the various works on the ‘*Ulum al-Hadith*—like those of Abu Muhammad al-Ramhurmuzi (d. 360/970), Abu Nu‘aym al-Isfahani

(d. 405/1014), Ibn al-Salah (D. 643/1245) and many others. These are 100 in number, and each of them is said to be important enough to be treated as an independent branch of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Some of them are connected only with the *Isnad* of the traditions and its criticism; some relate to their text; and some relate to both *Isnad* as well as the text. We will deal here with only two of them, and discuss their evolution and influence on *Hadith* literature.

### ASMA AL-RIJAL

#### (BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM OF THE NARRATORS OF HADITH)

One of the most important and richest branches of literature, which originated and developed in connection with the *Isnad* in *Hadith*, is that relating to the biography of the narrators of traditions. It is commonly known as *Asma' al-Rijal*. In it are included all the various works which deal with (i) chronology; (ii) biography; and (iii) criticism of the narrators of traditions or of any class of narrators, or with any such aspect of their life as may be helpful in determining their identity.

(i) *Chronology*. The consideration of chronology commenced and developed among the Muslims at an early period in the history of Islam. There is a difference of opinion as to the exact time when it was first used by the Muslims. According to some authorities, dates were introduced into official correspondence by the Prophet himself in the fifth year of the Hijra, when a treaty was concluded between him and the people of Najran.<sup>2</sup> But it is generally held that this was done by 'Umar b. al-Khattab—on the unanimous advice of a congregation of important Muslims—in the sixteenth or the seventeenth year of the Hijra.<sup>3</sup> The same far-sighted caliph followed a chronological principle in the award of pensions to the various groups of Muslims of his time, according to their priority in the acceptance of the (Islamic)

faith, which (principle) was already accepted by the Community as a point of great distinction. Its use assumed greater importance on account of the necessity for an explanation of the historical verses in the Qur'an, and of the determination of the dates of revelation of the legal verses, in order to decide which of them had been cancelled and which of them were still in force.

They followed in their chronology the lunar calendar, which had been adopted by the Arabs long before the advent of Islam. But originally, at least the Meccans among the Arabs followed the solar calendar, which is evident from their division of the year according to the seasons, and also from the significance of the names of the various months. This is proved conclusively by J. Wellhausen in his scholarly book, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*.<sup>4</sup>

(ii) *Biography*. The composition of biographical works with a perfect chronological order of events, however, was commenced by the Muslims before the end of the first century of the Hijra.

Horovitz has shown that Aban (d. between 86 and 105 A.H.), the son of the caliph 'Uthman; 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (26-94/646-712); and Shurayh (who is said to have been born in 20 A.H. and lived more than 100 years) had collected a good deal of material relating to the biography of the Prophet. Soon after them, Wahb wrote a book on the *Maghazi*—a fragment of which is preserved at Heidelberg in Germany.<sup>5</sup> Wahb was followed by numerous biographers of the Prophet during the second and third centuries. The fragment and the text of such of these biographies are still extant, reveal a thorough use of the chronological system by their authors.

(iii) *Criticism of the Narrators*. A general critical estimate of the reliability of the narrators, based on their life and character, in order to determine the veracity of their reports, appears to have been taken into consideration earlier than the period when the *Isnad* became long enough to admit the application of the chronological method. Ibn 'Adi (d. 365/

975) in the introduction to his book, *Kamil*, has given a general survey of the development of criticism of the narrators from its beginning *up till* his own time. According to him, narrators had been criticised by 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, 'Ubada b. al-Samit and Anas, among the Companions; by al-Sha'bi, Ibn Sirin and Sa'id b. al-Musaiyib, among the Followers. But it did not become common till the next generation, because most of the narrators till then had been reliable. In the next generation, when the narrators of doubtful reliability grew in number, criticism of them also assumed greater importance. About the middle of the second century, therefore, A'mash, Shu'ba and Malik criticised a large number of the narrators, and declared some of them as weak, and some as unreliable. Two of the greatest critics of *Rijal* flourished about the same time. They were Yahya b. Sa'id al-Qattan (d. 198/813) and 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Mahdi (d. 198/813) and their verdict on the narrators' reliability or unreliability was accepted as final. Where they differed in their opinion about the reliability of a narrator, the Traditionists used their own discretion. They were followed by another class of critics which included Yazid b. Harun and others.<sup>6</sup>

Chronology, biography and criticism, having developed among the Muslims at an early period in the history of Islam, were applied by them to the *Isnad* in traditions—in order to check their genuineness and determine the reliability of their narrators. Chronology was taken by the Traditionists as an important key to determining the genuineness of the *Isnad*. "Whenever you have a doubt about the veracity of a narrator", remarks Hafs b. Ghiyath (d. 160/776), "test him by means of the year" (i.e. the dates of birth and death). Sufyan al-Thauri is said to have declared : "When the narrators forged traditions, we used *Ta'rikh* (chronology) against them."<sup>7</sup> Hassan b. Zayd observed: "We never used any device more effective against the forgers than *Ta'rikh*."<sup>8</sup>

Chronology had been used, therefore, as early as the second century by the Traditionists in order to test the truth of the statements of the narrators. Some examples of it are

cited by Muslim in the introduction to his *Sahih*; and a good many of them are found in the works on *Asma' al-Rijal*.

The Traditionists, however, having realized the importance of chronology, biography and criticism, compiled independent works dealing in chronological order with the narrators of traditions before the end of the second century. "Such registers of the narrators of traditions," says Otto Loth, "as had been chronologically arranged and in which every Muslim Traditionist in general received a definite place, had been already in common use among the Traditionists as indispensable hand-books in the second century."<sup>9</sup>

The beginning of the compilation of the works on *Asma' al-Rijal* is difficult to determine. But Ibn Nadim has mentioned two books—*Kitab al-Ta'rikh*—in his *Fihrist* in the discourse dealing with the works on jurists and Traditionists. One of these books is by the great Traditionist, 'Abd Allah b. al-Mubarak; and the other, by Layth b. Sa'd (d. 165-75/781-91), an important Traditionist of the Maliki school.<sup>10</sup> These authors had little interest in history; and their works are not included in that section of the *Fihrist* in which historical works are dealt with. We may, therefore, count them among the earliest works on our subject. Horowitz is correct in his opinion that the earliest works on the subject were composed about the middle of the second century.<sup>11</sup> Among the products of the second century of Islam, however, must be included such works on our subject as the *Kitab al-Tabaqat*, *Kitab Ta'rikh al-Fuqaha'*, *Kitab Tabaqat al-Fuqaha' w'al-Muhaddithin*, *Kitab Tasmiyat al-Fuqaha' w'al-Muhaddithin*,<sup>12</sup> *Kitab Tabaqat man rawa 'an al-Nabi* by al-Waqidi and Haytham b. 'Adi—both of whom died in the beginning of the third century, and whose works served as important sources to the later writers on the subject—e.g. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), Ibn al-Khayyat (d. 240/854) and others.<sup>13</sup>

As all the early works on our subject have been lost, it is impossible to determine definitely their general plan and the nature of their contents. But from the later works which are based on them and which we have received, and from

the general tendencies of the Traditionists of the time, it may be inferred that their contents mainly consisted of: (a) short descriptions of the genealogies and the dates of their birth and death, (b) some biographical matters relating to the narrators; and (c) a short criticism of their reliability together with the opinions of the important authorities about them. These are the main features of the contents of the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd which will be described later; and these matters, as we have seen, had received the serious attention of the Traditionists before the end of the second century of the Hijra.

The compilation of the biographies of the narrators of traditions, begun in the second century of the Hijra, was continued with zeal and vigour in the following centuries. In the third century, not only various specialists in the subject—e.g. Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/844), Khalifa b. al-Khayyat, Ibn Abi Khaythama (d. 279/892) and others — but also almost every traditionist of reputation compiled simultaneously with his collection of Traditions, some biographies of their narrators also. The compiler of each of the six standard works in *Hadith* literature also has to his credit one or more important books on the biography of the narrators of traditions.<sup>14</sup> Some other Traditionists also—e.g. 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Abi Shayba (d. 235/849), 'Ali b. al-Madini, and many others — wrote on the subject.

During the fourth and the succeeding centuries, the compilation of the biographies of Traditionists appears to have become a fashion of the time throughout the vast Islamic dominions. Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Africa, Spain and India all produced numerous biographers of the Traditionists, who compiled huge works on the subject.

The works on the *Asma' al-Rijal* helped the growth of general biographical literature in the Arabic language. There were compiled in Arabic the biographies of poets, grammarians, physicians, saints, jurists, judges, calligraphers, lovers, misers, idiots, and of other classes of people. Biographical literature in Arabic is, therefore, extremely rich.

"The glory of the Muhammadan literature," says Dr. Sprenger, "is its literary biographies... There is no nation, nor has there been any, which like them, has during twelve centuries narrated the life of every man of letters."<sup>15</sup> Margoliouth remarks: "The biographical literature of the Arabs was exceedingly rich; indeed it would appear that in Baghdad, when an eminent man died, there was a market for biographies of him, as is the case in the capitals of Europe in our time... The literature which consists in collected biographies is abnormally large, and it is in consequence easier for the student of the history of the caliphate, to find out something about the persons mentioned in the chronicles, than in any analogous case."<sup>16</sup>

The magnitude of these biographical dictionaries may be ascertained from the large number of men whose biographies they contain. Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqat* contains the biographies of more than 4000 traditionists. Al-Bukhari's *Ta'rikh* deals with more than 42,000 traditionists. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, in his *History of Baghdad*, gives short biographies of 7831 persons. Ibn 'Asakir, in the eighty volumes of his *History of Damascus*, collected together the biographies of a much larger number of people. Ibn Hajar, in his *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* and *Mizan al-I'tidal*, summarized the biographical notices on 12,415 and 14,343 narrators of traditions respectively. These figures, which may be easily cross-checked from numerous other works on our subject, are sufficient to show the magnitude of biographical literature in Arabic.

The works on the *Asma' al-Rijal*, however, differ from one another in their scope, their general plan, and the detailed nature of their contents, according to the main object of their compilers and authors. Some of them contain extremely short notices on a particular class of narrators of traditions. Such is the *Tabaqat al-Huffaz* of Dhahabi,<sup>17</sup> and various other works on weak or unreliable narrators. Some of them deal with only their names, their *kunyas* and their titles or *nisbas*. To this class belong the various works on *Asma'w' al-Kuna*, and the well-known *Kitab al-Ansab* of



al-Sam'ani. Some of them contain biographical details of all such narrators as lived in or visited any particular town — e.g. Aleppo, Baghdad, Damascus, etc. To this class belong the works of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Ibn al-'Asakir and others. Some of them deal with only the reliable or unreliable narrators — e.g. the *Kitab al-Thiqat* and the *Kitab al-Du'afa'* of Ibn Hibban and others. Some of them contain the biographies of only such narrators as find a place in any particular collection of traditions or in a group of them. To this class belong a large number of works which deal with the lives of the narrators on whom al-Bukhari or Muslim or the authors of all the six standard works on *Hadith* relied.

The works on the *Asma' al-Rijal* may, therefore, be classified into two main groups: (1) the general works, and (2) the special works.

1. *General Works.* By the general works on the *Asma' al-Rijal* are meant such of them as contain the biographies of all the narrators, or at least of all the important ones among them, who had been known to their compilers. To this class belong most of the early works on the subject: the *Tabaqat* of Muhammad b. Sa'd, the three *Histories* of al-Bukhari, the *History* of Ahmad b. Abi Khaythama, and many other works on the *Asma' al-Rijal*, which were compiled during the third century of the Hijra, and which contain the biographies of all the narrators, or at least of all the important ones among them, who had been known to their authors. The earliest of these works received by us is the *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir* by Ibn Sa'd. The life of its author has been admirably described by two distinguished German orientalists, Loth<sup>18</sup> and Sachau;<sup>19</sup> and I cannot do better than summarize their researches:

Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Sa'd b. Muni' al-Zuhri belonged to a family of Babylonian slaves of the family of the great Traditionist, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, who had granted them their liberty. Born at Basra, the great centre of *Hadith* learning, Ibn Sa'd must have been attracted by the charms of the Tradition, in pursuit of which he himself travelled

through Kufa, Mecca and Madina, where he must have stayed for quite a long time. At last, he came to Baghdad, the greatest centre of intellectual activity in his time. Here he came in close contact with Waqidi, one of the early Arab historians. Ibn Sa'd worked as Waqidi's literary assistant for a considerable time, which gave him his title *katib al-Waqidi* (the secretary of Waqidi), by which he is generally known. By his reputation in Baghdad as a historian and Traditionist, Ibn Sa'd attracted a band of students who sat at his feet and studied Tradition and History with him. One of the most prominent among them was the great historian, al-Baladhuri, who in his later career borrowed a great deal from Ibn Sa'd in his well-known work *Futuh al-Buldan*. Ibn Sa'd died in the year 230-/844.

Ibn Sa'd, who possessed great learning and had an equally great love for it, was also a great lover of books, the possession and collection of which had already become a fashion among the Muslims. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi says:<sup>20</sup> "He possessed vast learning, knew a large number of traditions, had a great thirst for them, narrated a good many of them, and had collected a large number of books, particularly the rare ones, and those on *Hadith* and *Fiqh*." "Of the collections of the works of al-Waqidi," adds al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, "which were in the possession of four persons during the time of Ibn Sa'd, his was the largest."

Ibn Sa'd made the best use of his vast learning and rich library in compiling his own works. Two of them—the *Tabaqat* and the *Kitab Akhbar al-Nabi*—have been mentioned by Ibn al-Nadim,<sup>21</sup> and a third, a smaller edition of the *Tabaqat*, is mentioned by al-Nawawi<sup>22</sup> and others, but is not known to be extant.

Ibn Sa'd's *Kitab Akhbar al-Nabi* constitutes only a part of the *Tabaqat*. It was compiled and completed by the author, but was handed down to posterity by his student, Harith b. Muhammad b. Abi Usama (186-282/802-896).<sup>23</sup>

The *Tabaqat* was entirely planned and compiled by Ibn

Sa'd, but he was unable to complete it. He appears, however, to have read whatever he had written of this book, to his student, Husayn b. Fahm (211-289/826-901), who is reported to have been a keen student of traditions and of the biographies of the narrators.<sup>24</sup> Ibn Fahm completed the book according to the plan of its author, added to it his short biographical notice as well as that of certain other narrators, whose names had already been included by the author in the general plan of his work, and read it to his own students.

Both of these books of Ibn Sa'd were received from his two students by some of their common disciples. One of them, Ahmad b. Ma'ruf al-Khashshab (d. 322/933), combined them in a single book of enormous size,<sup>25</sup> and read it out to his students. One of these students, Abu 'Umar Ahmad b. 'Abbas (generally known as Ibn Hayyuya, 295-382/907-992) who is celebrated for his keen interest in works on the early history of Islam and for the preservation of early historical and biographical works of the Arabs, edited the whole work without making any change in its text.<sup>26</sup> His student, al-Jauhari (363-454/973-1062), handed it down to posterity. Through him, all the extant manuscripts of this great work are traced back to the author. All these manuscripts preserve the author's original arrangement of the contents.<sup>27</sup>

On the basis of all the various known manuscripts of Ibn Hayyuya's edition, the great Book of Classes was edited by an enthusiastic band of German scholars, and then published over a period of twenty years by the Prussian Academy of Sciences.

According to this printed edition, in spite of various lacunae, the book contains over and above a detailed biography of the Prophet, the biographical notices of about 4300 narrators of various generations down to 238/852, in the following order:—

Vol. I, part 1. Genealogy of Muhammad and his biography down to his migration to Madinah. Ed. by E Mitwoch.

Vol. I, part 2. Biography of the Prophet after his

migration to Madinah and various matters relating to it. Ed. by E. Mitwoch and E. Sachau.

Vol. II, part 1. The various campaigns of the Prophet. Ed. by J. Horovitz.

Vol. II, part 2. Sickness and death of the Prophet. Elegies written on his death by various poets, and the biographies of the Muslim jurists and readers of the Qur'an who lived in Madinah during the Prophet's lifetime and just after his death. Ed. by J. Schwally. 1912.

Vol. III, part 1. Biographies of the refugees who took part in the Battle of Badr. Ed. by E. Sachau. 1904. Part 2 of this volume (ed. J. Horovitz, 1904) deals with the same class of persons.

Vol. IV, part 1. Biographies of such early converts to Islam as did not take part in the Battle of Badr, but migrated to Abyssinia, and later on took part in the Battle of Uhud. Ed. by J. Lippert. 1906.

Vol. IV, part 2. Biographies of other Companions who were converted to Islam before the conquest of Mecca. Ed. by J. Lippert. 1908.

Vol. V. Biographies of the *Tabi'un* (Followers) who lived in Madinah. Ed. by K.V. Zettersteen. 1905.

Vol. VI. Biographies of the Companions and the other jurists and Traditionists who settled down and lived in Kufa. Ed. by K. V. Zettersteen. 1909.

Vol. VII, part 1. Biographies of the Companions and other jurists and Traditionists who lived in Basra. Ed. by B. Meissner. 1915.

Vol. VII, 2. Biographies of the Companions and other jurists and Traditionists of Baghdad, Syria, Egypt, Africa, etc. Ed. by E. Sachau. 1908.

Vol. VIII. Biographies of the women narrators, including the Companions and the Followers. Ed. by C. Brockelmann, 1904.

In this great work, no definite common plan has been

followed in all the articles. But those on the Companions are long, and generally contain their genealogy both on their father's and mother's sides, the names of their wives and children, the period of their conversion to Islam, the part taken by them in the important events during the Prophet's lifetime, the dates of their deaths, and other matters connected with their habits, and biographies which were considered by the Traditionists to be of importance. Of course, the reader is very often disappointed with regard to important biographical particulars which he might naturally have expected. But at the same time, he very often comes across important historical matters which he may not have expected. All these details, however, are entirely wanting in the articles on the later narrators, which do not exceed one or two sentences. Many of them are altogether blank, from which fact it has rightly been inferred that these parts were meant by Ibn Sa'd to serve as notes to be developed at some later date, had he not died before completing his work.

As Prof. Sachau says, Ibn Sa'd has shown in his work impartiality and honesty, thoroughness and scrupulosity, objectivity and originality.<sup>28</sup> His impartiality and honesty have been generally acknowledged. Just as, in spite of being a Maula of the Hashimites, he took no part in their party politics, so in his articles on the various persons, he gave no expression to his personal relation to or prejudice for or against anyone, and recorded in simple, unvarnished style all that he knew and considered of importance about them. His thoroughness and attention to details are abundantly shown by his constant reference to the various versions of an event as well as to the differences among his authorities. His objectivity is illustrated by the total absence of irrelevant material in his work. His originality is shown by his sub-classification of the narrators according to the various provinces in which they lived, and the general statement of the *Isnads* of the various versions of an event before describing them, and the entire absence of them in certain parts, all of which are ascribed to his own ingenuity.<sup>29</sup> He has been

compared by Sachau with Plutarch—the difference in their works being due to the fact that Plutarch formed the last link in a long chain of biographers whose contributions to the art he had inherited, whereas Ibn Sa'd had been one of the pioneers in the field.

Be that as it may, the *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd is one of the earliest extant works on *Asma' al-Rijal*, containing biographical notices of most of the important narrators of the most important period in the history of traditions. It is a rich mine of many-sided, valuable information about the early history of Islam. It may be described not only as the most important extant work on the subject, but also as one of the most important works in Arabic literature in general. Since the beginning of the fourth century A.H., it has been used as a source by a large number of authors on Arabian history and biography. Al-Baladhuri,<sup>30</sup> al-Tabari,<sup>31</sup> al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Ibn al-Athir, al-Nawawi<sup>32</sup> and Ibn Hajar<sup>33</sup> used it as an important source for their works, and al-Suyuti prepared an epitome of it. As a general biographical dictionary of the narrators, it appears always to have occupied a unique position in the *Asma' al-Rijal*. The other works of the *Tabaqat* class dealt only with particular classes of narrators.

#### KITAB AL-TA'RIKH OF AL-BUKHARI

Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqat* was soon followed by the works of al-Bukhari, who claimed to have possessed some biographical knowledge about every narrator of traditions. He compiled three books on the history of the narrators in general. The largest of these is said to have contained the biographical notices of more than 40,000 narrators. But no complete manuscript of the book is known to exist. Only various parts of it are preserved in certain libraries on the basis of which the Da'irat al-Ma'arif, Hyderabad (India), has prepared a text of the book, and published it.

2. *Biographical dictionaries of particular classes of narrators.*  
 Begun almost simultaneously with the biographical

dictionaries of the narrators in general, was the compilation of those of particular classes of them. The most important of them are :—

- i. those containing biographies of the Companions;
- ii. those containing biographies of narrators who lived in or visited any particular town or province; and
- iii. those containing biographies of narrators belonging to the various schools of jurists.

#### i. THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES OF THE COMPANIONS

These constitute the vital part of the *Asma' al-Rijal*. But no independent book on the subject appears to have been written before the third century of the Hijra, when the great traditionist, al-Bukhari, compiled the first independent biographical dictionary of the Companions<sup>34</sup>, which must have been mainly based on :—

- (a) *Sirat* literature;
- (b) numerous monographs relating to the various important events during the early period of the history of Islam;
- (c) a large number of traditions containing biographical material relating to the Companions,
- (d) and the earlier general works on the *Asma' al-Rijal*.

Al-Bukhari was followed by numerous authors during the different periods in the history of Islam, who produced a vast literature on the subject. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'ali (201-307/816-919), Abu al-Qasim 'Abd Allah al-Baghawi (213-317/828-929), the great Traditionist and copyist, Abu Hafs 'Umar b. Ahmad<sup>35</sup> (commonly known as Ibn Shahin, 297-385/909-995), one of the most prolific writers of his time (who spent more than 700 *dirhams* just on ink),<sup>36</sup> Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Yahya b. Manda (d. 301/913), Abu Nu'aym Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah (336-403/947-1012), who has been described as one of the best Traditionists,<sup>37</sup> Ibn 'Abd

al-Barr (368-463/978-1070) of Cordova, a contemporary of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, and the greatest Traditionist of his time in the West,<sup>38</sup> Abu Musa Muhammad b. Abi Bakr (501-581/1107-1185), and many others produced an extensive literature on the biographies of the Companions.

The results of the researches of all these scholars were collected together in the seventh century A.H., by the well-known historian and Traditionist, 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir (555-630/1160-1230) in his book, *Usd al-Ghaba*, which was based mainly on the works of Ibn Manda, Abu Nu'aym, Abu Musa and Ibn Abd al-Barr (whose *Isti'ab* contained the biographies of only 300 Companions, and to which a supplement was written by Ibn Fathun, which contained the biographical notices of about the same number of Companions).<sup>39</sup> Ibn al-Athir, however, does not follow his sources blindly.

Having discussed in the introduction the chief sources of his book and its general plan, Ibn al-Athir defined the term Sahabis, gave a short sketch of the biography of the Prophet, and put together in alphabetical order the biographies of 7,554 Companions, some of whom were discovered by him through his independent researches. In the various articles, he generally gave the names of the Companions, their *kunyas*, their genealogy and certain biographical matters relating to them. When he differed from his predecessors, he discussed the matter at length, gave reasons in his own support, and explained the causes of the mistakes made by his predecessors. In spite of many repetitions in it, the *Usd al-Ghaba* was generally appreciated and accepted by the Traditionists as a reliable authority on its subject. Several biographers—e.g. al-Nawawi, al-Dhahabi, al-Qushayri, al-Suyuti, and others—prepared epitomes of it.<sup>40</sup>

The *Usd al-Ghaba* was followed in the ninth century of the Hijra by a more comprehensive work on the subject—viz. the *Isaba fi Tam'yiz al-Sahaba*. Its author, Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadl b. 'Ali Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (773-852/1371-1448) was the greatest literary figure of his time. He was



born in old Cairo in 773. He lost both his mother and his father (who was a jurist) when he was a mere infant. He was brought up by one of his relatives, who was a business man. But the little orphan was endowed by nature with strong intellectual powers and great tenacity of purpose. In spite of great difficulties in his way, he stuck to his literary pursuits, and soon excelled in Arabic language and literature as well as in all the various Islamic sciences and Arabic calligraphy. To *Hadith* particularly he devoted a considerable part of his life. For 10 years he sat for its sake at the feet of the well known Traditionist, Zayn al-Din 'Iraqi (725-806/1351-1404) who had reintroduced into the teaching of traditions, the old method of *Imla'* (dictation), and had brought the study of *Hadith* back to its former glory. Having finished his studies, Ibn Hajar settled down in Cairo in 1403, and devoted himself to the service of *Hadith* and the connected sciences. His authority as a traditionist was recognized by his contemporaries, and he was appointed professor in several educational institutions. He also served as a judge — a post he accepted after refusing it several times. He died in 852/1404.

He left about 150 of his incomplete and complete compositions and compilations, which show his versatile genius. The *Fath al-Bari*, a commentary on *Sahih al-Bukhari*, is described as a work which repaid the great debt owed by the literary world of Islam for six centuries to the great work of al-Bukhari.

In the *Isaba*, Ibn Hajar put together the results of the labours of all his predecessors in the field of the biographies of the Companions, criticising them in certain cases, and adding to them the results of his own researches. He divided his book into four parts:—

Part I. Such persons as are mentioned in any tradition—genuine or fair or weak—directly or indirectly, to be Companions.

Part II. Such persons as were too young when the

Prophet died, but were born during his life-time in the family of the Companions, which leads to the presumption that they fulfilled the necessary conditions of being one of them.

Part III. Such persons as are known to have lived both before and after the advent of Islam, but are not known to have ever associated with the Prophet. These persons, never known to have been Companions, are nevertheless mentioned in some of the works on the lives of the Companions, simply because they lived in the same period as them.

Part IV. This part contains the biographies of such persons as are wrongly mentioned in some of the biographical dictionaries as Companions.

## ii. THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES OF THE NARRATORS WHO LIVED IN OR VISITED ANY PARTICULAR TOWN OR PROVINCE

Another huge set of biographical dictionaries of narrators had been completed according to places or provinces where they lived or which they visited. The number of such dictionaries is large. Not only almost all the provinces, but almost every important town, had not only one or two but several biographers, who collected together the biographies of every important Traditionist or man of letters who either lived in it or visited it. Mecca, Madinah, Basra, Kufah, Wasit, Damascus, Antioch, Alexandria, Qayrawan, Cordova, Mausil, Aleppo, Baghdad, Isfahan, Bukhara, Merv, etc. all had their historians and biographers of their men of letters.<sup>41</sup>

Many of these provincial historians dealt with the political history of these provinces. Many of them dealt mainly with the biographies of their men of letters in general and those of the narrators and the Traditionists in particular. Many of the early biographical dictionaries, which contained the biographies of the important Muslim scholars of particular places (since their conquest by the Muslims till the time of the compilers), are supplemented by their successors with

those of the eminent men of the later periods down to almost modern times.

One of the most important works of this type is al-Khatib al-Baghdadi's *Tā'rikh Baghdad*, which is the earliest biographical dictionary of the men of letters—principally, Traditionists—who either belonged to, or delivered lectures in, the great metropolis.<sup>42</sup>

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (392-463 A.H.), whose full name was Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Ali, was the son of a Khatib of a village near Baghdad. He was born in the year 392/1002, and began the study of *Hadith* at the age of 11. He acquired his knowledge of it at the various centres of learning in Mesopotamia, Syria, Arabia, and Persia; and soon he gained excellence in the various Islamic sciences, particularly, the *Asma' al-Rijal* and *Hadith*. He delivered lectures on *Hadith* in Damascus, Baghdad and other places, and some of his teachers (e.g. al-Azhari and al-Barqani) accepted him as an authority on traditions, and received them from him. Finally, he settled down in Baghdad, where his authority on *Hadith* was recognized by the caliph al-Qa'im and his minister Ibn Maslanma (d. 450/1058), who ordered that no preacher should narrate in his sermon any tradition that had not been approved by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi. Here he read out almost all his books to his students, and here he died in 463/1071.

His life in Baghdad had not been altogether uneventful. During the revolt of al-Basasiri (450/1058) by whom Ibn Maslama was killed, al-Khatib also suffered much. He had to leave the town and wander about in Syria for some time; and when after the execution of the rebel he returned to Baghdad in 451, he suffered at the hands of the Hanbalites—on account of his leaving the Hanbali school and joining the Shafi'ite school, and also on account of his liberal views towards the Asha'irah and the Scholastic philosophers. Many treatises against him by the Hanbalites, are mentioned by Haji Khalifa. Al-Khatib, however, had been fortunate in having attained all his great desires—namely, (1) to read out his great History of Baghdad to his students in that town;

and (2) to be buried by the side of the grave of al-Bishr al-Hafi (150-227/767-841).

Al-Khatib compiled 56 large and small books and treatises, a list of which is given by Yaqut in his *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*.<sup>43</sup> The most important of these works is his *Ta'rikh Baghdad*. In this monumental work (which he read out to his students in the year 461), having given the topography of Baghdad, Rusafa, and al-Mada'in (Ptesiphon), which has been fully utilised by Le Strange in his learned book on Baghdad, al-Khatib compiled together the biographies of 7831 eminent men and women (*chiefly*, Traditionists) who were either born in Baghdad, or who came to it from other places and delivered lectures (on traditions). He has also described some important visitors to the city. He gives their names, *kunya*, dates of death, and certain other biographical matters, and the opinions of important Traditionists about their reliability.

In the arrangement of the various articles, al-Khatib gave pride of place to the Companions. They were followed by those having the name Muhammad. In the other articles, alphabetical order was followed. The articles on those who were known by their *kunya*, and on women, were put at the end.

In this book al-Khatib showed his vast knowledge of *Hadith* and of the *Asma' al-Rijal*, and also demonstrated his impartiality and critical acumen. He always gave the source of his information, and very often discussed (in his notes) the reliability of the traditions quoted, and of the reports received by him; he tried to determine the facts without prejudice or partiality.<sup>44</sup>

Al-Khatib's description of Imam Ahmad and al-Shafi'i as 'master of the Traditionists' and 'crown of the jurists' (respectively)—for which he has been criticised—does not appear to be unfair. He was generally accepted as trustworthy, and was regarded as the greatest traditionist of his time in the East—as his contemporary of Cordova (Ibn 'Abd al-Barr) was taken as the greatest Traditionist of his time in the West.

Al-Khatib had brought his dictionary down to 450 A.H. His successors continued the work after him. Al-Sam'ani (506-562/1113-1167), al-Dubaythi (558-637/1163-1239), Ibn al-Najjar (578-643/1183-1245) and others wrote supplements to his book, compiling biographies of eminent men of Baghdad right up to their own times.<sup>45</sup>

#### HISTORY OF DAMASCUS BY IBN al-'ASAKIR

The entire plan of the *History of Baghdad* was followed by Ibn al'Asakir in his huge biographical dictionary of the eminent men of Damascus in 80 volumes, a work which excited the wonder and admiration of the later writers.

Ibn al-'Asakir, whose full name was Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Hibat Allah b. 'Abd Allah b. al-Husayn, was born in a respectable and literary family in Damascus in 499/1105. His father, his brother, his son and his nephew are all described by al-Subki<sup>46</sup> as Traditionists of some eminence. Some of his predecessors also appear to have taken part in the campaigns against the Crusaders, which gave him the title of Ibn al-'Asakir, by which he is generally known. Ibn al-'Asakir, having prosecuted his early studies with his father and other teachers in Damascus, travelled widely and visited all the important centres of *Hadith* learning, a long list of which is given by al-Subki in his *Tabaqat*. He sat at the feet of more than 1300 teachers of *Hadith*, of whom more than 80 belonged to the fair sex. Finally, he settled down at Damascus, his native town, where he devoted himself wholly to the service of *Hadith* and the connected subjects, compiling books and treatises, and delivering lectures on them in the college which had been founded for him by the great general and jurist, Nur al-Din Muhammad al-Zanji, who had offered him several posts which he refused. He died in 571/1175.

His keen intellect, sharp and retentive memory, vast knowledge of traditions, sincerity and piety, and his devotion to traditions and the sciences of tradition were acknowledged by all his contemporaries. His successors also regarded him

as one of the greatest and most reliable Traditionist of his time. (To this the traditions related by him in praise of Damascus must be an exception).

He compiled a large number of important works; a long list of his works is given by Yaqut in the *Mu'jam al-Udaba'*.<sup>47</sup> Many of these are still preserved in various libraries in the East and in the West.

The most important and most voluminous of his works is the *History of Damascus*. Its compilation was taken up at the request of a friend of the author. But the work could not be continued on account of certain anxieties and sad events. The excessive desire of Nur al-Din al-Zanji, however, to see the work completed, induced the author to complete it during his old age.<sup>48</sup>

In this book, after giving a short history of Syria in general and of Damascus in particular, and after stating briefly the superiority of Syria to other places on the basis of certain traditions extolling Syria in general and Damascus in particular, and after describing its prophets and monasteries, Ibn al-'Asakir collected together the biographies of the eminent men and women of various classes (chiefly Traditionists) who either lived in or visited Damascus. The biographical part begins with the articles on those whose names are Ahmad, which are headed by a short biography of the Prophet of Islam. In the arrangement of all the articles, alphabetical order in the names has been observed without any preference being given to any class of men. At the end are added the articles on men whose names are not known according to the alphabetical order of their *kunya*. There are followed by those on the eminent women in the same order as in the case of men.

Like al-Khatib al-Baghdadi and Ibn al-'Asakir, various other Traditionists and historians collected together the biographies of men of letters in general, and of the narrators in particular, of various other towns. Ibn Manda (d. 301/911) and Abu Nu'aym (336/403) of Isfahan collected together the biographies of the narrators who belonged to their

town,<sup>49</sup> and the work of the latter is preserved in the libraries of Rampur, Constantinople and Leiden.<sup>50</sup> Al-Hakim (321-405/933-1014) compiled those of the narrators who belonged to Nishapur, which has been admired by al-Subki.<sup>51</sup> Abu al-Qasim 'Umar b. Ahmad al-'Uqayli, generally known as Ibn al-'Adim (588-660/1191-1262) collected together the biographies of eminent men, including a large number of Traditionists, of Aleppo in about 30 volumes. It was supplemented by his different successors.<sup>52</sup> Abu Sa'd al-Sam'ani (506-562/1113-1167) compiled a biographical dictionary mainly of the Traditionists of Merv in 20 volumes.<sup>53</sup> The Traditionists of Wasit, of Kufa, of Basra, of Hirat, and Qazwin and of many other towns found their biographers in Ibn al-Dubaythi<sup>54</sup> (558-637/1162-1239), Ibn al-Najjar,<sup>55</sup> Ibn Shabba<sup>56</sup> (173-263/789-876), Ibn al-Bazzaz,<sup>57</sup> and in al-Rafi'<sup>58</sup> respectively.

Over and above the biographical dictionaries of the Traditionists and narrators living in particular towns, there were also collected together the biographies of the narrators living in certain provinces—e.g. Andalusia, Africa, San'a, Egypt, Khurasan, etc.—by Ibn al-Fardi, Ibn Bashkwal, al-Humaydi and others.

### Notes

1. TR, 9.
2. TR, 256.
3. *Ibid*, *loc. cit.*
4. PP. 94-101. Also see EI<sup>ss</sup>, "Ta'rikh", W. Hartner.
5. IsC, i, 550, 558; TIS, v, 133.
6. 'Adi's *Kamil* has been quoted by Jaza'iri in TN, p. 114.
7. MIS, 154.
8. TR, 254.
9. ZDMG, xxiii, 600.
10. FN, 228, 199.
11. *Der Islam*, viii, 47.
12. FN, 99f.
13. *Ibid*.
14. FN, 230, 231, 233; KZ, ii, 141.
15. ITS, i, intro., p. i.
16. ArH, 7f.
17. In Suyuti's abridgement.

19. See *infra*, pp. 174 (n. 3) f.

19. TIS, iii, part 1, editor's intro.

20. TB, v, 321f.

21. FN, 171.

22. TA, 7; WA, No. 656.

23. "I received this book from the beginning till the end of the part dealing with the life of the Prophet," says Harith.

24. TB, viii, 92 ff.

25. TB, v, 160.

26. TB, iii, 121.

27. This new-edition of the *Tabaqat* had been an object of keen study by a crowd of students of the *Asma' al-Rijal* for more than three centuries, as is shown by its *Ljaza* and *Isnad* found in its various manuscripts which have come down to us. But since about the end of the eighth century A.H., on account of its enormous size and the appearance of many short and handier books on the various branches of *Asma' al-Rijal*, the interest in it began to decline, and at last its copies became scarce. No complete manuscripts of the book are now known to exist (ZDMG, xxiii, 611). But this decline of literary interest in the history and sciences of Islam in the Islamic world itself has been made up for by the interest of the modern European Orientalists in the ancient and mediaeval history and literature of the East, who during the last two centuries have rendered greater literary service to its literature than its own people. The *Tabaqat* of Ibn Sa'd also did not escape their searching attention. Among them, Dr. Sprenger and Prof. Wustenfeld had been the first to realize the great importance of the Book of Classes. They published articles describing its manuscripts and inviting the Orientalists' attention to its value as a source for the early history of Islam (*Ibid.* iv.) They used it as an important source for their own work. Other Orientalists also—e.g. Sir William Muir and Th. Noldeke—demonstrated its great value by drawing upon it in their works. But a thorough and minute study of Ibn Sa'id was reserved for another German scholar, Otto Loth, who published in 1869 his masterly treatise, *Das Classenbuch des Ibn Sa'ids*, and a scholarly article on the Origin and Meaning of *Tabaqat* (ZDMG, xxiii, 593-614), describing the Gotha and the Berlin manuscripts of the book, the nature of their contents, the origin and history of the *Tabaqat* class of biographical dictionaries, and the place of the work of Ibn Sa'd among them, and discussing its importance as a rich mine of valuable material concerning the history of Islam. It was Loth who paved the way for the edition of this huge book.

But its enormous size prevented its edition and publication for a long time. For 18 years after the publication of the treatises of Loth, no one thought of editing or publishing the book. It was in June 1887 that the Prussian Academy of Science resolved to publish the work, and put Prof. Sachau in charge of it. Sachau took it up with his usual zeal and energy. Within a year, other manuscripts of the book which had not been known to Loth were discovered five (5). They were all collected together with the help of scholars, librarians and Government officials, and in 1898 their collation and edition was begun by a distinguished enthusiastic band of German scholars. In 1904 the 8th and the 3rd volumes of the great book were published. The other volumes followed, and the publication of the 7th volume in 1918 completed the edition of the text.

Thus by the supreme aid of the great literary interest of the Prussian Academy of Sciences under the guiding influence and active sympathy of Prof. Sachau, with the help of various libraries in the East and the



West, and the continuous efforts of about a dozen German Orientalists, the great Book of Classes was published over some 20 years (On some more recent indices of the book which have appeared since 1920, see the art. "Ibn Sa'd" in EISS).

A more recent reproduction of the German Edition of the *Tabaqat* has been published (in 8 vols.) at Beirut (1376-1377/1957-58).

28. TIS, iii, editor's intro., pp. xxx *et seq.*
29. ZDMG, xxiii, 604-605; TIS, iii, 1, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.
30. OIS, i, intro., p. 9.
31. ATB, i, 1113-26. Cf. TIS, i, 1, pp. 28, 29.
32. TA, 7.
33. ITS, i, 2.
34. ITS, i, 1.
35. TB, x, 111-117.
36. *Ibid*, xi, 267.
37. TH, xiii, p. 62.
38. WA, No. 847.
39. KZ, i, p. 277.
40. TR, p. 32; KZ, i, p. 278 f.
41. For the importance of 'theological local historiography' reference may be made to the following passage (attributed to Salih b. Ahmad, the author of *Tabaqat al-Hamadhaniyin*):  
 "When religious scholarship has been cultivated in a place and scholars lived there in ancient and modern times, the students of traditions there and all those interested in traditions should begin with a thorough study of the *Hadith* of their home town... After the student knows what is sound and what is unsound in their traditions, and is completely acquainted with the *Hadith* scholars in his city and their conditions, he may occupy himself with the traditions of other places and with travelling in search of traditions."  
 (TB, i, p. 214: cited in HMH, p. 144)  
 On this question also see MIS, 100ff.
42. The only earlier history of the city by Tayfur Ahmad b. Abi Tahir (204-280/819-983) of which only the sixth volume has survived, and been lithographed and translated into German by H. Keller, deals with the history of the Caliphs.
43. MUD, i, p.p. 248-249.
44. TB, i, p. 224; ii, p. 521; iv, p. 176; vi, 101.  
 O.P. 146/24.
45. KZ, ii, p. 119f.
46. TK, iv, p. 213, p. 320; v. 66, 148.
47. MUD, v, p. 140-144.
48. TD, i, 10f.
49. WA, Nos. p. 32, 631.
50. KT, 83; Cat. Ar. Mss., Leiden
51. WA, No. 626; TK,
52. KZ, ii, p. 125f.
53. WA, No. 406.
54. *Ibid*, No. 672.
55. MUD, i, 410; KZ, ii, 143.
56. WA, No. 502.
57. KZ, ii, p. 157.
58. *Ibid*, pp. 140f.

## CHAPTER 8

### ***The Sciences of Tradition—Contd.*** **(‘Ulum al-Hadith)**

#### CRITICISM AND TECHNIQUES OF HADITH

Side by side with *Hadith* literature, there also developed the methods of criticism and the techniques of *Hadith*. It is natural for a reasonable person who may receive the report of an event in which he may be interested, to inquire about the character and reliability of the reporter as well as the likelihood of the event which has been reported to him. In the Qur'an, at any rate, we find a clear indication of the criticism of the reporters of an event as well as of the likelihood of its having taken place. It emphasised the principle of the criticism of the reporters of an event in verse XLIX, 6: "O you who believe! If an unrighteous person comes to you with a report, look carefully into it." The principle of the plausibility of a statement has also been indicated in the Qur'an in several places. The accusation against 'A'ishah has been described as an evident falsehood,<sup>1</sup> because her character was above all suspicion. The Qur'an has also rejected as unreasonable and unfounded, the theory of the sonship of Ezra and of Jesus, which was asserted by the Jews and Christians.<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet (Muhammad) also criticised many of the reporters, and derided the superstitious beliefs of the Jews and of the pagan Arabs as unreasonable and foolish.

After the Prophet's death, when his *Ahadith* were sought after and were reported by many of his Companions, several Companions criticised some of the reporters and rejected some of their reports. 'Ali said about the report of a *Hadith*

by Mu'qil b. Sinan that he could not accept the report of an uncultured, slovenly Bedouin.<sup>3</sup> 'Umar b. al-Khattab said in the presence of many Companions that he could not give up the Book of God and the practices of His Prophet because of the report of a woman (Fatimah bint Qays), for no one could tell whether she was right or wrong, and whether she remembered (what she reported) or had forgotten.<sup>4</sup> 'Ammar b. Yasir once reported a *Hadith* of the Prophet with regard to *Tayammum* in an assembly of the Companions in which 'Umar b. al-Khattab was also present. On hearing the *Hadith*, Umar said to 'Ammar : "Fear God."<sup>5</sup> This shows that 'Umar did not accept what 'Ammar had reported. The *Sahih* of Muslim contains a report in which Ibn 'Abbas criticised numerous 'judgements' of 'Ali b. Abi Talib.<sup>6</sup> When Mahmud b. al-Rabi' reported in an assembly of the Companions that the Prophet had said that he who professed that there was no God but Allah would not be put into hellfire, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari remarked that he did not think that the Prophet had ever said any such thing.<sup>7</sup> Many other instances of the criticism of the reporters of *Hadith* by their fellow-Companions (e.g. 'A'ishah, 'Umar b. al-Khattab, Ibn 'Abbas and others) may be easily gathered from works on *Hadith* and the *Asma' al-Rijal*. These criticisms of the Companions against one another show that they were not above criticism. As a matter of fact, according to the principles accepted by most of the Sunni Muslim scholars, no one except the Prophets is infallible. And even the Prophets are liable to commit mistakes in matters which do not concern the religions revealed to them.

The practice of criticising the *Ahadith* of the Prophet and their reporters (by the Companions) was followed by the Traditionists of the later generations. Shu'ba b. al-Hajjaj, Yahya b. Sa'id al-Qattan, 'Ali b. al-Madini, Ahmad b. Hanbal and many other Traditionists criticised the reporters of the *Hadith*, pointed out their character, and established the degree of their reliability. Thus there developed in Arabic two important branches of literature: (1) *'Ilm Riwayat al-Hadith*,

which is also called *Mustalah al-Hadith* (the science of narration or techniques of *Hadith*); (2) *'Ilm al-Jarh w' al-Ta'dil* (the science of criticism of the reporters).

1. The earliest treatise received by us containing matters connected with the *Riwayat*, or transmission of *Hadith*, is the *al-Risalah* of al-Shafi'i (767-820 A.D.), which deals mainly with the jurisprudence of the Shafi'i system of Islamic law. It was followed by the works of Abu Muhammad al-Ramhurmuzi (d. cr 350/961), al-Hakim (d. 403/1012), Abu Nu'aym (745/1038) and of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (1002-1071) who systematized the matter described by his predecessors, in his *Kitab al-Kifayah*. He was followed by Qadi 'Iyad (d. 1139) and Abu Hafs, each of whom wrote a treatise on the subject. After them, Ibn al-Salah (d. 643/1245) compiled together the results of the works of all the previous writers on the subject, adding to them some of his own observations in his book known as *Kitab 'Ulum al-Hadith*. He was followed by numerous writers on the subject, like Ibn Kathir (1302-1372), al-'Iraqi and others.<sup>8</sup> The *Fath al-Mughith*, which is al-Sakhawi's commentary on the *Alfiya* of al-'Iraqi, and the *Tadrib al-Rawi*, which is a commentary on the *Taqrib* of al-Nawawi, contain exhaustive treatment of *'Ilm Riwayat al-Hadith*.

Al-Shafi'i and others have described the qualifications necessary for a transmitter of *Hadith* as follows :—"He (the transmitter) must be of firm faith, well known for his truthfulness in what he reported. He should understand its contents, should know how a change in expression may well affect the ideas expressed therein. He should report *verbatim* what he learnt from his teachers, and not narrate in his own words the sense of what he had heard. He must possess a retentive memory and should remember his book well, if he reported from it. He should refrain from citing the authority of those whom he met, to authenticate things which he had not learned from them. His report must be in agreement with what had been reported by those who were recognized to have a good memory, if they also transmitted these reports."<sup>9</sup>

All the authorities on the subject (the Traditionists as well as the jurists) are unanimously of the opinion that a transmitter of a tradition, in order to be acceptable, must be of firm faith, mature age and proved integrity, and have a good memory. He must be well-versed in the method of learning, preserving and transmitting the traditions. He must be thoroughly conversant with the names, careers and characters of the earlier reporters of traditions, as well as with the various classes of them and their defects and special characteristics.

The writers on the subject have divided the traditions, into three classes, according to the degree of their reliability based on the perfection or imperfection of the chain of their transmitters, the freedom of their texts from hidden defects, and their acceptance or rejection by the Companions, the Followers and their Successors.

These three classes are : (i) the *Sahih*<sup>10</sup> or Genuine; (ii) the *Hasan* or the Fair; and (iii) the *Da'if* or the Weak. The Weak traditions have been subdivided according to the number of defects in their reports or in the texts of the reports themselves. These subdivisions fall into several categories, e.g. the *mu'allaq* (the suspended), the *maqtu'* (interrupted), the *munqati'* (broken), the *mursal* (incomplete), the *Musahhaf* (a tradition having a mistake in *Isnad* or in the text), the *Shad* (a tradition with a reliable *Isnad* but contrary to another similarly attested tradition), the *Maudu'* (the forged), etc. These and other techniques of *Hadith* have been fully explained and discussed in the works on '*Ulum al-Hadith*. But the authorities on the subject differ from one another in their interpretation of some of these technical terms. Some of these different interpretations have been explained by al-Sakhawi and al-Suyuti in their works which have already been mentioned.

The writers on '*Ulum al-Hadith* have also described the methods of learning, preserving, teaching and writing down the traditions in book form. They have also described the methods of collating the manuscripts with their original

copies as well as other matters connected with the subject.

2. *'Ilm al-Jarh w'al-Tal'dil* (the science of criticism of the reporters of Hadith). This science forms a very important part of *Asma' al-Rijal*, which has been already dealt with in some detail.<sup>11</sup> A short but complete description of its origin and development has been given by al-Jaza'iri.<sup>12</sup>

The Traditionists as well as the jurists, however, have also divided the traditions according to the number of their transmitters during the first three generations of the Muslims, into: (i) the *Mutawatir*; (ii) the *Mashhur*; and (iii) the *Ahad*.

The *Mutawatir* are the traditions which have been transmitted throughout the first three generations of the Muslims by such a large number of transmitters as cannot be reasonably expected to agree on a falsehood. There is a difference of opinion about the number of the transmitters necessary for this during each of the first three generations of the Muslims. Some authorities fix it at seven, some at forty, some at seventy,<sup>13</sup> and some at a much higher number.<sup>14</sup> Very few of the traditions received by us belong to the category of the *Mutawatir*. They have been collected together by al-Suyuti in his *al-Azha al-Mutanathirah fi al-Akhbar al-Mutawatirah*.<sup>15</sup>

The *Mashhur* are the traditions which, having been transmitted originally in the first generation by two, three or four transmitters, were later on transmitted on their authority, by a large number of transmitters in the next two generations. Such traditions are also called the *Mustafid*. To this class belong a large number of traditions which are included in all the collections of *Ahadith* and constitute the main foundations of Islamic law.

The *Ahad* are the traditions which were transmitted during the first three generations of the Muslims by one to four transmitters only.

The traditions have been also subdivided into two classes : (i) those that were narrated by all their transmitters *verbatim*, the expressions used by all of them being identical,

and (ii) those traditions the contents of which were reported by their transmitters in their own words.

### THE LEGAL IMPORTANCE OF TRADITIONS

The legal importance of all these three classes of traditions has been discussed in works on Islamic Jurisprudence. The first two classes are recognized by all the important Sunni jurists as the second most important source of Islamic law since the life-time of the Prophet. The last of them, i.e. the *Ahad*, has been accepted as superior to *Qiyas* (Analogy) by all the important Sunni schools of Islamic law, except that of Imam Malik, who gives superiority over the *Ahad* traditions to *Qiyas*.

As a matter of fact, the acceptance of *Hadith* as a source of Islamic law is advocated in the Qur'an which says : "Whatever the Apostle gives to you, take it; and whatever he forbids, abstain from it."<sup>16</sup> The Prophet also very often emphasised the importance of his *Hadith* for his followers.<sup>17</sup> He as well as his immediate successors took a knowledge of *Hadith* into consideration while appointing the state officials. According to Darimi, whenever any legal case came to Abu Bakr, he looked into the Qur'an and decided the case according to it, if he found it there. But if he did not find it in the Qur'an, he referred to the practice of the Prophet and decided the case accordingly. If he failed to find it there also, he inquired from the other Companions about it; and if they informed him of any decision of the Prophet in the matter, he thanked God and decided the case accordingly. But if the Companions failed to cite any decision of the Prophet, Abu Bakr collected the leaders of the people, and sought their advice; and after they had arrived at an agreed decision, he gave his verdict according to it.<sup>18</sup>

The same was the practice of 'Umar also. Whenever any question of law came to him for decision and he failed to find any authority for it in the Qur'an, he inquired from his fellow Companions whether they knew any *Hadith* on the

subject. If they reported any relevant tradition and also produced sufficient evidence in their support, he accepted the tradition and gave his judgment according to it. He asked an assembly of the Companions (when the problem of the delivery of a dead child by a woman on account of being attacked by another woman arose) to relate to him any *Hadith* on the subject, which they might know. Mughira related a *Hadith* on the subject. 'Umar asked him to bring a witness to support him in his narration. Muhammad b. Maslama supported Mughira. 'Umar then accepted the *Hadith* and decided the case accordingly.<sup>19</sup> Many similar cases are mentioned in the *Hadith* works, e.g. the fixation of the number of *takbir* in the *Jinaza*-prayer, the imposition of the poll-tax on the Zoroastrians,<sup>20</sup> the use of *tayammum* in the case of night-pollution.<sup>21</sup> In all these cases, *Ahadith* were sought out and laws were laid down according to them.

There were also cases which were decided by the Companions according to their own opinion<sup>22</sup> (*Ra'iy*), if they were ignorant of any *Hadith* on the subject. But they changed their decisions as soon as they came to know of it. There are reported cases in which Companions like Abu al-Darda' and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri migrated from a place because some of the people living there preferred their own personal opinions to the traditions which were related to them.<sup>23</sup>

Of course, there were cases in which 'Umar and some other Companions, on being told of a *Hadith* on any subject, did not follow it and gave their judgement against its obvious sense and according to their own opinion. During the caliphate of 'Umar, there arose the important problem of the right to the fifth part of the booty for the relatives of the Prophet. The Prophet's practice was in its favour. It was discussed for several days in an assembly of the Companions, and after a long discussion 'Umar decided against the practice of the Prophet and what was considered to be the command of the Qur'an.<sup>24</sup> For he held that the verses of the Qur'an and the basic Islamic principle did not justify the continuance of the practice of the Prophet after his



death.<sup>25</sup> There are mentioned several other cases of this type in *Hadith* works. But a close scrutiny of all these cases shows that the *Hadith* of the Prophet was not rejected altogether. It was either differently interpreted, or the memory and the understanding of the reporters were questioned.

The Muslim doctors, however, have discussed the basic problem of the nature and character of the words and deeds of the Prophet. Many of them are of the opinion that every word and action of the Prophet is of a religious character and must be literally followed by every Muslim. Others differentiate between what he said or did as a Prophet and what he said and did as an ordinary man. Some of the Muslim doctors are of the opinion that what he said or did as an ordinary man has no religious character and, therefore, need not be followed by all the Muslims. For the Prophet himself said: "I am a human being. When I command you to do anything concerning your religion, then accept it; and when I recommend to you to do anything on account of my personal opinion, then you should know that I am also a human being."<sup>26</sup> This means that the latter recommendation may or may not be accepted. These personal actions and likes and dislikes of the Prophet also are of two classes : (i) those which are restricted to him only, on account of his being in a privileged position as a prophet; (ii) and those which may be followed by other Muslims also.

All the orthodox Muslim jurists, however, are unanimously of the opinion that every tradition of the Prophet which is proved to be reliable according to the canons laid down by them and is of a religious character, is of great legal importance, second only to that of the Qur'an. In this there is no difference of opinion between the Traditionists and those who are known as *Ashab al-Ra'iy* (the people of opinion). All the important Muslim Jurists belonging to the first three generations of the Muslims preferred the traditions to *Qiyas*. As a matter of fact, many of them refused to express their own opinion on legal matters in cases in which no tradition was known to them.<sup>27</sup> The practices followed by

the Companions were also accepted as legal authority by the Muslims of the next two generations, because they reasonably presumed that they must have been based on the traditions and the practices of the Prophet, which were scrupulously followed by the Companions after due consideration. This was the basis of the principle followed by Imam Malik in accepting the practices of the Companions as an important legal authority.

But the important Muslim jurists differed among themselves about the legal significance of those traditions about the reliability of which they were not certain. To this class of traditions belongs the *Ahad* category. Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Malik did not consider all the traditions belonging to this category as superior to *Qiyas*. Imam Malik preferred *Qiyas* to all *Ahad* traditions, which were not backed by the practices of the Companions and the Followers. Imam Abu Hanifa accepted some of them and rejected others, as was the practice of 'Umar b. al-Khattab<sup>28</sup>. He accepted them in connection with ordinary matters, if he was satisfied about the legal acumen and instinct of the reporter. But in cases of intricate legal problems, he rejected them, unless they were supported by circumstantial evidence and basic Islamic principles.

But Imam al-Shafi'i preferred the *Ahad* traditions to *Qiyas* in all cases. He has tried to prove it in all his works by quoting a large number of cases in which the reports of single individuals were accepted by the Prophet himself and, after him, by many of the Companions also.

It may thus be seen that the difference of opinion between the various orthodox Sunni schools of Muslim law is not with regard to the acceptance of *Hadith* in general (as an important source of Islamic law), but about a particular class of it. It has been already shown that the first three generations of the Muslims treated those *Ahadith* and *suman* of the Prophet, which they considered to be reliable and of religious importance, to be the second important source of Islamic laws. It is, therefore, unwarranted to assert

that the *Ahadith* were not considered as an important source of Islamic law during the classical period (as a modern European orientalist has tried to prove.<sup>29</sup>)

### THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICISM OF HADITH

The Traditionists and the jurists have developed some sound principles for the criticism of *Hadith*. These principles are described in the works on *Usul al-Hadith* and Jurisprudence, and some of them may also be gathered from the works on the *Maudu'at* and the *Asma' al-Rijal*.

As every *Hadith* consists of two parts—(i) the *Isnad* (the chain of narrators) and (ii) the *Matn* (the text)—the principles of the criticism of *Hadith* may also be classified into two categories (i) those relating to the *Isnad*, and (ii) those relating to the text.

(i) The criticism of the *Isnad*, its origin and earliest application to *Hadith*, and its development, the origin and development of biographical literature in connection with it, and other connected matters (including the necessary qualifications of the narrators) have already been discussed in detail. The principles of its criticism, which are based on them, may be summarized as follows :—

(a) Every *Hadith* must be traced back to its original reporter through a continuous chain of transmitters, whose identity, unquestionable character and high qualities of mind and heart must have been established.

(b) Every *Hadith* reporting an event which took place every now and then in the presence of a large number of people, must have been originally reported by several narrators.

It is on account of these principles that a large number of traditions, which do not follow them, have been rejected by all the important Traditionists, and are included in the works on the *Maudu'at*. An example of this class is the *Hadith* reported by Abu Hurayra alone, that the Prophet used to recite *Bismillah* loudly in all his prayers.<sup>30</sup> Another example

is the *Hadith* (said to have been reported by Abu Bakr alone) which says that, at the time of the Call for prayers, the Muslims kissed their thumbs when the Prophet's name was recited. Each of these traditions was rejected by the Traditionists because it was reported by a single Companion, whereas the events reportedly took place several times every day in the presence of a large number of Muslims.

(ii) The genuineness of the Isnads, however, is no proof of the actual genuineness of the text of the traditions to which they are attached.<sup>31</sup> According to the Traditionists, even if the Isnad is faultless, the text may be a forgery. Ibn al-Jauzi has appreciated and quoted the remark : 'If you find a *Hadith* contrary to reason, or to what has been established to be correctly reported, or against the accepted principles, then you should know that it has been forged.'<sup>32</sup> Abu Bakr b. al-Tayyib is reported to have remarked that it is proof of the forged character of a tradition if it be against reason and common experience; or if it be contrary to the explicit text of the Qur'an or the Mutawatir traditions or the Consensus (*Ijma'*); or if it contains the report of an important event taking place in the presence of a large number of people, whereas it has been reported by a single individual; or if it lays down severe punishment for minor faults, or promises high rewards for insignificant good deeds.<sup>33</sup> Al-Hakim has given several examples of forged and weak traditions having sound Isnads.<sup>34</sup> Al-Suyuti has remarked that very often, there are found weak or forged traditions with sound Isnads; and he has given several examples of them.<sup>35</sup> As a matter of fact, the only sure guidance to the determination of the genuineness of a tradition is (as remarked by Ibn al-Mahdi and Abu Zar'a) a faculty that is developed by a Traditionist through long, continuous study of the traditions, and as a result of constant discussions about them with other Traditionists.<sup>36</sup>

On the basis of the above-mentioned and other similar remarks by important Traditionists, the following general principles for the criticism of the texts of the traditions may be laid down :—

(a) A tradition must not be contrary to the other traditions which have already been already accepted by the authorities on the subject as authentic and reliable. Nor should it be contrary to the text of the Qur'an or the accepted basic principles of Islam ;

(b) a tradition should not be against the dictates of reason and natural laws and common experience;

(c) the traditions containing disproportionately high rewards for insignificant good deeds or disproportionately severe punishments for ordinary sins must be rejected;

(d) the traditions containing the excellent virtues of the various chapters of the Qur'an should not be generally accepted as reliable;

(e) the traditions containing the excellence and praises of persons, tribes and particular places should be generally rejected;

(f) the traditions which contain detailed prophecies of future events with dates must be rejected ;

(g) and the traditions containing such remarks of the Prophet as may not be in keeping with his prophetic position, or such expressions as may not be suitable to him, should be rejected.

It is on account of these principles that a large number of traditions which are included in such collections of them as are commonly thought to be reliable, have been rejected by the compilers of the standard *Hadith*-collections; and they are included in the collections of forged traditions (like those of Ibn al-Jauzi,<sup>37</sup> Mulla, Ali al-Qari,<sup>38</sup> al-Shaukani<sup>39</sup> and others).

Among them al-Shaukani has collected together in his book the results of the researches of the previous writers on the subject. He has also given the names of the *Hadith* works in which the forged traditions are to be found. Moreover, in many cases, he has pinpointed the narrators who forged these traditions.

In the standard collections of traditions also (in spite of the great care of their compilers), there are still found some weak or forged traditions, which have been discussed and criticised by their commentators and some other authorities on traditions. The following are some examples of them:—

(a) The *Hadith*, reported by al-Bukhari, that Adam's height was sixty yards, has been criticised by Ibn Hajar on the basis of the measurement of the homesteads of some of the ancient nations, which do not show that their inhabitants were of an enormous height.<sup>40</sup>

(b) The *Hadith* reported by al-Bukhari, that the verse of the Qur'an (XLIX, 9) : 'And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them,' refers to the quarrel between the party of 'Abd Allah b. Ubayy and that of the Companions of the Prophet, was criticised by Ibn Battal, who pointed out that the verse referred to a quarrel between two parties of the Muslims, whereas 'Abd Allah b. Ubayy had not accepted Islam even outwardly at the time when the verse was revealed.<sup>41</sup>

(c) The *Hadith*, that if Ibrahim, (the son of the Prophet) had lived, he would have been a prophet, was severely criticised by al-Nawawi, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Ibn al-Athir; and al-Shaukani included it among the forged traditions.<sup>42</sup>

(d) The *Ahadith* reported by Ibn Maja on the excellence of Qazwin (his own hometown) were declared by the Traditionists to be forged ones.

(e) The *Hadith* reported by some Traditionists, that 'he who loved, kept clean and died, is a martyr' was declared by Ibn al-Qayyim to have been forged and baseless. He said that even if the Isnad of this *Hadith* were as bright as the sun, it would not cease to be wrong and fictitious.<sup>43</sup>

(f) The *Hadith* reported by al-Bukhari that Abraham would pray to God on the Day of Judgement (Saying : "O Lord you promised that you would not humiliate me on the Day of Judgement") was criticised and rejected by al-Isma'ili (cited by Ibn Hajar).<sup>44</sup>

(g) Most of the traditions concerning the coming of al-Dajjal and of Mahdi, and those concerning Khadir, were declared by the Traditionists to be forged ones, and were included in the works on the *Maudu'at*.

Many other similar instances of the criticism of the text of traditions included in their collections by even standard, authoritative compilers may be gathered from the commentaries on those compilations and the works on the *Asma-al-Raijal* and the *Maudu'at*. It is thus clear that the Muslim doctors criticised not only the Isnad of each tradition but also its text, and did not fail to point out its defects, weakness and its unreliability or its forged character (determined in accordance with the principles which have been mentioned above).

To conclude, I may add that there is enough material available for the compilation of a standard collection of completely authentic traditions out of the already generally accepted compilations of them. I have reached this conclusion after examining each tradition contained in them, according to the principles already laid down by the Muslim Traditionists, as well as according to those which may be prescribed by modern literary critics. It is, of course, a tremendous task ; but, certainly, it can be achieved with the combined efforts of such Muslim scholars and modern Orientalists as may be interested in the subject.

### Notes

1. Qur'an, xxiv, 12.
2. *Ibid*, ix, 30.
3. NA, 180; JT (Ah), ii. 197.
4. JT, i, 141.
5. SM, i, 61 (B. *al-Taymmum*).
6. *Ibid*, i, 10.
7. SB, i, 141.
8. TR, p.9
9. RSh, 99.
10. According to the Traditionists, the term *al-Sahih* does not mean that the tradition is actually true and genuine, but that it fulfils the conditions laid down by them for a reliable tradition.
11. See *supra*. pp. 189ff.

12. TN, 113-118.
13. NA, 176.
14. TR, 190.
15. *Ibid*, 191.
16. Qur'an, LIX, 7.
17. SD, 26.
18. SD, 32-33.
19. SB, ii, 124.
20. *Ibid*, 137; RSh, 114.
21. SAD, i, 52.
22. On *Ra'iy* and *Qiyas* see SB, book "*I'tisam*", ch. *dhamm al-ra'iy et el*, and 'Asqalani's commentary on the same.
23. RSh, 118-120.
24. See 'Asqalani's commentary on SB, book *Fard al-khumus*, ch. *Qismat al-Imam*, and various other places.
25. *al-Faruq*, ii, 198-201.
26. SM, ii, 264; HB, i, 249-50 (Indian ed., Lahore, 1351 A.H.)
27. SD, 26ff.; RSh, 117-19; JBI, ii, 31-33.
28. *al-Faruq* (Lucknow, 1898) by Shibli Nu'mani, ii, 196.
29. Prof. Joseph Schacht in OMJ.
30. NA, 185f.
31. As has been pointed out by Robson. See pp. 25-26 in his article on *Isnad* (*op. cit.*)
32. TR, 100.
33. TR, 99.
34. UD, 58 ff. These traditions have been quoted by Robson (*op. cit.*)
35. TR, 48.
36. *Ibid*, 89.
37. *Kitab al-Maudu'at*.
38. *al-La'ali al-Masnu'ah fi al-Ahadith al-Maudu'ah*.
39. FMj.
40. SB, *Kitab al-Anbiya*, *bab khalq Adam*; FB (Egypt, 1320 A.H.), vi, 230.
41. SB, *Kitab al Sulh*, ch. I; also see FB *ad. loc.*
42. See "Ibrahim" (the son of the Prophet) in IMA and UGh. Also see FMj, 144. For another version of this *Hadith*, see SB, ii, 434 (Krehl's ed., cited in IT, 63).
43. ZM, 97.
44. FB, viii, 354.





ILLUSTRATION 3(i)a

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ILLUSTRATION 3(i)c

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### ILLUSTRATION 3(ii)

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**T**his book has been composed in order to present to the English-reading public, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, the viewpoint of Islam with regard to Hadith Literature, its origin and development.

In composing the book, not only many of the important works of the modern European orientalists have been utilized but also a large part of the original Arabic sources, some of which have not hitherto been fully utilized. The reader, therefore, may find in this work some important material which may not be available in any of the European works on the subject.

Cover Illustration: Cross and star shaped ceramic tiles; Kashan, Iran, late 13th century AD

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